

COUNTRY LIFE

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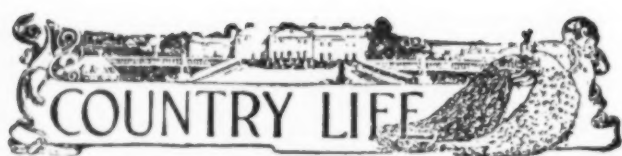
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H.H. PRINCESS VICTORIA LOUISE OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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GARDENING FOR WOMEN.

UNDER this title the Hon. Frances Wolseley has written a book which no doubt will attract a considerable amount of attention. The time is long past when the fact of women adopting horticulture as a profession is at all likely to create surprise. It has been a recognised calling for them during a considerable while—with its schools, colleges, training-grounds and all the other requisites for turning out capable experts. The scheme, in fact, is part of an enlargement of the sphere of woman's usefulness that marks the development of the twentieth century. The time has passed, and probably never will return, in which it was considered that the whole duty of woman was summed up in the work of spinning and rocking the cradle. Girls of the new generation have shown their determination to launch out into wider fields. Miss Wolseley points out with effect, however, that in the department of gardening they are not coming into competition with men. Their object is not to supersede the head-gardeners at great country seats, and far less to undertake the sterner work of the labourer. Miss Wolseley recognises that there is scope in gardening for those finer gifts in which women excel. She promises that "the lady gardener will bring to her task intelligence, good taste, refinement," and "what they lack in physical strength they endeavour to compensate by other equally important, yet softer, womanly qualities." The problem with which she is dealing has been admirably stated by Mrs. Creighton. It is that

under modern conditions a considerable portion of women have no other resort except that of working for their livelihood. With the poor this was always more or less the case; but Miss Wolseley's concern for the moment is with the daughters of the educated but poor middle classes. As she very properly says, it often happens that the head of the family, after years of hard work, has to retire owing to illness or age. Under these circumstances his pension is usually very small, and we are afraid that in modern times the daughters, who must necessarily be poor, stand less chance of making suitable matches than they would have done half a century ago. There is a general rise in the standard of living, and young people when they set up house in our times do so on a more ambitious scale than used to be the case. They want at the beginning the same comforts and even luxuries that are possessed by their parents. One result has been to make the young man still more shy than he used to be of engaging himself to an impecunious girl. The latter, therefore, unless she is going to be dependent upon some relative, must perforce fare out into the world and earn her own livelihood. With those who are particularly gifted the problem is not, perhaps, very difficult. The born artist, the clever writer, the young woman who can take her degree in medicine, even the nurse, have a wide field before them where sex is no drawback; certainly in artistic and literary work the woman stands on the same footing as a man, commands the same remuneration and is equally dependent on her energy and initiative.

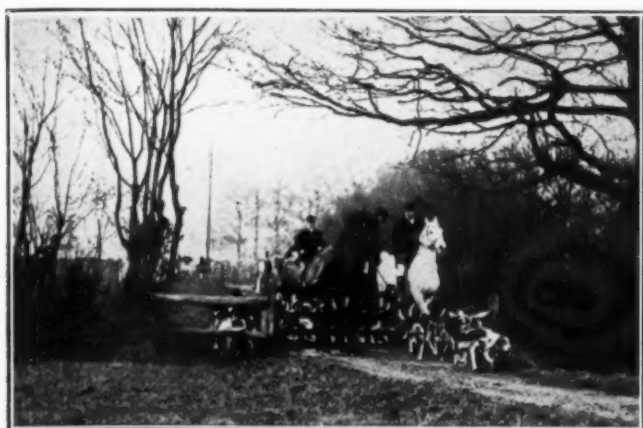
How far gardening can be included among the fine arts open to women is a question not very easy to decide. Under Miss Wolseley's tutelage the answer would probably be in the affirmative. Her object in teaching is to educate her pupils for the finer work in gardening; where she hopes they will excel is in the finer taste they display in the choice and arrangement of colours and in the artistic treatment of borders. Their delicacy of touch is of the highest value in such work as hybridisation, cross-fertilisation and the handling of the orchard, while the rare greenhouse plants demand something that it is almost unfair to expect from the ordinary garden hand. Miss Wolseley frankly admits that up to now the feminine has not excelled the male gardener even in the performance of these duties, but she says there is a certain future for them in such work if they persevere in study. The practical part of her advice, apart from the purely horticultural instruction, deals with the early training and education of girls. She fixes upon twenty or under as a good age to begin the work. The girl pupil is all the more likely to succeed if her practical apprenticeship follows a college education. At starting it is better for her not to jib at her work; she must not think there is anything really menial in turning manure, clearing refuse, sweeping leaves or mowing the lawn. Homely tasks such as these familiarise the girl with garden processes, and when she is able to do them perfectly herself she can give sound instructions to a servant. But her very weakness ought to incline her to study gardening in its deeper aspects from the beginning. She should follow closely in the footsteps of Science, says her mentor, and adds that if her intelligence is not sufficient to make her very speedily worth more than the £1 per week man gardener she had better take up other work, for she certainly cannot compete with him in physical strength. Two or three years should be spent in this way—that is to say, in practical garden work and in scientific study. Botany, chemistry and physics she must get well into her head. No small part of her education will consist in visiting other gardens, when time and opportunity are available. After college training, she can complete her education by accepting some subordinate post; but Miss Wolseley warns the young student not to attempt the management of a large garden too quickly.

Incidentally we have referred to a case of this kind as an alternative to marriage, but even if a girl be subsequently led into the way of matrimony she has lost nothing by learning such a profession as that of gardening. On the contrary, giving her, as it does, plenty of exercise in the open air and at the same time occupying the mind in active and pleasant work, a woman trained in the manner indicated is equally qualified to earn her livelihood or to be a "mother in Israel." Other callings for women may be more remunerative than that of gardening, but there is none more wholesome and healthy for mind and body.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Her Highness Princess Victoria Louise of Schleswig-Holstein. Princess Victoria is the eldest daughter of Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein and a niece of His Majesty the King.

* * It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens, or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.



COUNTRY NOTES

DURING a conversation in the House of Lords on Monday, Lord Carrington made an interesting statement about the working of the Small Holdings Bill. He announced that, up to the time of speaking, 141,008 acres, or 236 square miles, had been applied for. There were over 9,000 applicants on the list, and applications were still coming in. He went on to express a hope that in the course of the next few years thousands, if not tens of thousands, of hard-working, industrious men would be making an honest and, he hoped, a profitable livelihood on the land. At the same time, he admitted that the condition of things is still inchoate. The county councils and landowners generally were meeting him in every possible way; but they had only been at work for twelve weeks, and the preliminary enquiries were not yet complete. He promised, however, to lay before the country at the earliest possible date the approximate figures in regard to the applications and the publication of those that were genuine, and how many of the applicants were of the right sort. Lord Carrington has always taken a very rosy view of the Bill, and it would be unfair to blame him for being sanguine. But even if his greatest hopes were fulfilled, if, say, 10,000 new small holders were established, it is obvious that the settlement of these on the land would do very little indeed to relieve the congestion of the towns. When we come to that subject the figures run into millions, instead of thousands.

In this connection a very striking letter from the New York correspondent of *The Times* ought to be carefully read. It is an account of an exhibition meant to illustrate the terrible congestion in the flats of New York. In many cases, the correspondent says, the actual contents of the rooms had been transplanted from the tenements; and he describes one windowless room as looking more like a Chinaman's opium den than anything else. A legend underneath read, "300,000 rooms like this still left and occupied in various parts of New York." The other horrors we read of are that for a population of 2,781 persons there were only 264 water-closets and not one bath. Of 1,588 rooms 441 were dark and had no ventilation to the outer air, while 635 obtained their ventilation, their sole light and air from a dark and narrow air-shaft. The population in New York grows at an immense rate; it is estimated that about 200,000 new immigrants settled there last year, and the statistician calculates that at the present rate of growth the population of New York in 1920 will be something like 7,000,000. In many districts the density of population amounts to 1,000 persons to the acre, while over fifty blocks have a population of 3,000 to 4,000. This is a very striking and deplorable state of affairs. It can with profit be compared with the worst cases of overcrowding in London.

The moral of all this is plain. In the United States no complaint is possible about the scarcity of land. In spite of all that has been done during the last twenty years there are great virgin tracts still awaiting the hand of the cultivator; and even in those districts which have been cropped for a long time, there has recently been manifested a reluctance on the part of the people to continue on the land, which has consequently fallen in value. Thus it is proved beyond cavil that the overcrowding of towns is not due to difficulty in obtaining a settlement on the soil. The truth is that commercial life, with its greater stir and excitement and its chances of brilliant success (even though they may be only in

the proportion of one in a thousand), exercises a magical attraction over those who used to be content to till the soil. As long as this is the case, philanthropy and legislation may do their best, but it is unlikely that they will ever succeed in completely remedying evils so deep-rooted and so gigantic. The figures we have quoted with careful consideration must have a sobering effect upon those who are building such high hopes on the working of the Small Holdings Bill.

The conditions under which fruit-farming in this country can be made profitable, and the right means to that desirable end, are certainly becoming much better understood and more practically observed. A fruit-growing society at Blairgowrie affords an instance in point, having lately published a balance-sheet—its first—showing a very satisfactory result. The area of ground under fruit-farms is being considerably increased in the country generally, and the success of the Blairgowrie experiment will probably act as an incentive to further enterprise of the kind in the North. Some of the land in Kent, which is being given up as hop-gardens on account of the unprofitable yield of recent years, is being turned into fruit-farms, but this is only the case with the better class of land. In the true Weald, which is not very well suited for fruit-growing, hops have been largely supplanted by wheat, which, again, as a consequence of lower prices, is not proving as remunerative as was hoped. Unfortunately, the imported dessert apples are able to compete more than successfully with the native fruit, except in the case of the very early kinds. So far as apples go, it is with cooking varieties that English farmers can do best.

NARCISSUS.

Lo! at my feet where irises are mirrored
Clear in the deep untroubled sun-lit water,
Fairer than all things fair, a face I knew not
Smiled at me smiling.

Eyes like a god's met mine that burned to meet them;
Lips made for loving laughed to match my laughter;
Joyous, we kissed: one kiss for love, and after
One for death also.

ANGELA GORDON.

No subject stands more in need of elucidation than does that of forestry, which too often is treated from a merely theoretical point of view. An example of the better method is supplied in a letter from a timber merchant of Crieff which was published a few days ago by the *Scotsman*. He had been asked to recommend the species of trees most suitable for planting. At present, in his opinion, larch is the most valuable crop, being worth from £50 to £150 an acre. He says he has cut down larch at sixty years of age which yielded £140 an acre. A mixture of larch and Scots fir yielded from £50 to £60 an acre. He has found it safer to plant larch and Scots fir mixed—half larch and half Scots fir. Spruce is becoming a very valuable tree owing to its use in the production of pulp and paper, and about it he says, "Wherever the ground is suitable for spruce plant spruce, and where it is not suitable for spruce then Scots fir, because Scots fir will grow where neither larch nor spruce will."

On the question of planting, the same correspondent has much that is valuable to say. In Scotland it usually costs from £3 to £6 an acre; this he considers extravagant, as he himself has planted at 25s. and 35s. an acre. This was some years ago, and the young plantations are now very valuable. Thirty years ago he planted an estate on the Caledonian Canal at a cost of 30s. per acre, and he says that now there is no finer larch plantation to be found in the whole of broad Scotland. In many places planting might be done even more cheaply than that, and Mr. Miller makes short work of the other expenses of afforestation. "I would spend no money," he says, "in draining, or fencing, or making roads." Here his point is that you want to plant as cheaply and as quickly as possible. When the crop is ready for cutting the timber merchants will soon make roads for themselves. Instead of draining wet land, he would plant it with spruce. In foreign countries he found no drains, fences or road-making. Another practical suggestion is that in Scotland, where the grass and heather are short, planting with seed might probably be quite satisfactory.

His method of sowing seed is to get a dozen small boys and place them in a row 3½ ft. apart, with a little hand-iron in the right hand. Their left-hand pockets are filled with seed, and they take out a little hole in the ground and drop in four or five seeds and tramp the foot on it, and then make a step forward and take out another hole. He reckons that seed-planting can be done in this way at a cost of not more than 3s. 6d. per acre. He has actually done it in Canada

at that price, and he pays the boys 4s. a day; in this country half of that would be considered a good wage. To clinch his argument he cites the fact that the United States of America last year used 103,000,000 railway sleepers, and that it took 600,000 acres of forest to supply that quantity. The British railways are supplied from Russia, and use about 4,000,000 railway sleepers each year. With such demands on it, it is no wonder that the timber supply of the world threatens to run out. The time cannot be far distant when the cost of timber will make afforestation a very remunerative form of cultivating land.

In a country so rich in old buildings as Great Britain, the problem of restoration is both important and difficult. It differs in many ways from the usual work of repair, because to be successful it must at one and the same time strengthen the building and yet leave untouched its salient characteristics—even the very stones of which it is constructed. In a most illuminating article which Mr. Francis Fox has contributed to the engineering supplement of *The Times*, it is laid down that not only should the old stones be preserved, but also their cracks and deformations, with their weather-worn arrises and surfaces, and with the very moss. To do this in the most effective and inexpensive manner the use of the grouting machine is advocated. The article will be found worthy of careful perusal by all who have the welfare of our old buildings at heart.

Sir Robert Hunter's appeal for more funds to complete the purchase of Ludshott Common on Hindhead will, we hope, meet with a liberal response. The common has been already described and illustrated in our pages, so that there is no need to say much more about it now. The desirability of obtaining it for the public along with the beautiful wooded slope of the series of ponds called Waggoners' Wells is too obvious to need insisting upon. The sum of £240 is urgently needed in order that the purchase of the common may be completed on the 25th of this month, while the sum that will be still required for the completion of the whole scheme amounts to about £590, a sum which should be forthcoming in the course of the next few months. The common has an area of, roughly, 540 acres, and, as it commands some very pretty views of East Hampshire, would be an undeniable benefit to the locality, and we earnestly trust, therefore, that the comparatively small sum required will be forthcoming within a short period.

Last Saturday Arbor Day was celebrated at Eynsford with all the accustomed pomp and ceremonies. Mr. E. D. Till, to whom the origination of this festival is due, is beginning to see the fruit of his work. Arbor Day was first celebrated in Eynsford in 1897, and during the period that has elapsed many of the trees planted on that occasion have come into bearing. On Saturday the ground selected for planting was the ugly patch in front of the station. Ivy and poplars were planted by young ladies from the Agricultural College at Swanley, and many of those who were present at the ceremony will no doubt live to see what was once an ugly spot turned into a place of beauty. Arbor Day is itself an institution of long standing, since it dates from 1872, when it was begun in Nebraska. Between then and 1896 it was estimated that 605,000,000 trees had been planted owing to the Arbor Day movement. Since then Australia, as well as England, has followed the example then set, with the result that the world has been enriched by the planting of many timber trees. Mr. Till may very well look upon his work and say that it is good.

If ever the highest honour which the Corporation of London can bestow were thoroughly deserved, it was so in the case of Florence Nightingale—felicitously described by Sir Joshua Dimsdale as "the initiator and pioneer of our nursing system." The obvious criticism to pass upon this honour is that it was a long time in coming. Miss Nightingale is now in her eighty-eighth year, and more than half a century has passed since she performed her memorable work during the Crimean War. It would almost appear as if some Divine instinct had warned her of the service that she could subsequently perform to her countrymen. Born of affluent parents and brought up in a refined and pleasant home, she still, at an early date, turned her attention to nursing, which was in a deplorable condition in those days. To some extent she was inspired by that great philanthropist, Elizabeth Fry. At any rate, she visited the hospitals of London, Edinburgh and Dublin, and made a lengthened tour among those of France, Germany and Italy. Finally, as the Kaiser reminded her on the occasion of his recent visit, she attached herself to the Kaiserwerth Institution on the Rhine, near Düsseldorf, under the tutelage of its founder, Dr. Fleidner.

After the battle of the Alma, therefore, when Sir William Howard Russell explained the horrors of the hospitals and the great need there was for some efficient and careful woman to organise a better system, it luckily happened that Mr. Sydney Herbert, the Minister for War, knew Miss Nightingale's qualifications, and wrote to her asking that she would undertake the work. By a singular and mysterious coincidence, Miss Nightingale, while the letter was coming to her, was engaged in writing to Mr. Herbert, volunteering her services. What she did in those troubled and difficult times, and how from that time to the present day her interest in nursing and in the welfare of all her countrymen—but particularly of women—has been kept alive, are familiar facts to us all. The name of Florence Nightingale is as much a household word as was that of the late Baroness Burdett-Coutts. She is in the truest sense one of England's greatest women, and the Corporation of London has only done at this late moment what should have been performed fifty years ago in inscribing her name upon its Roll of Honour.

"ARRY" ON THE COMING OF SPRING.

There's a feel in the air wot is Juneey and West,
And a balminess peace-like and pally;
There's the sun, bloomin' stranger, a-doin' 'is best
For ter bright up the black of ahr alley.
So I sits in me yard wiv a juicy ole pipe,
Lost in thinkin' o' days wot are comin':
Of the earth, bloomin' Eden, a-colourin' ripe,
And the birds and the bees and the 'ummin'.
Lor! I'm nuts on the trees wot are bustin' wiv green.
Under skies wot are blue splashed wiv yellor;
From the grass, bloomin' turfy, a-bouncey and keen
To the breeze, 'ighly scented and meller.
Struth! it's life to squat 'igh on the 'ead of a mahnd,
Sleepy, sniffin' the 'eath and the 'eather,
Wiv the sheep, bloomin' chirpy, a-friskin' arahnd
As the norses play touch—'ell for leather.
So, it's 'ere's to yer, Spring, dahn below, up above,
Wiv yer painters wot never slack lazy;
You're a pal, bloomin' welcome, a nolive-branch dove,
To the world, from the dook to the daisy.

F. W. FERGUSON.

A state of affairs has arisen in Devonshire which has considerable bearing on the question of old-age pensions. During the last year or two many instances have occurred of persons obtaining parochial relief, and yet having considerable sums of money deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank. It is a well-understood rule that this institution, like other banks, is bound to secrecy as to the affairs of its customers; but the Bideford Board of Guardians are going to approach the Postmaster-General in order to secure, if they can, a modification of this rule of privacy. Their claim is that when parochial relief is sought the Poor Law authorities ought to receive information from the Savings Bank as to whether the applicants are or are not in the possession of hoardings. An opinion prevails in the district, which is not uncommon in many other rural parts of England, that when the age of sixty is reached parish pay can be demanded by law. A rustic may frequently be heard to say, "I have paid taxes for forty years, and now want my rights," meaning parochial relief, and this regardless of whether he be entitled to it on account of poverty or not. The point will be an interesting one for the Postmaster-General to decide.

The winding of a watch we all know to be a delicate operation. Few of us imagined that it was worth the grave and serious attention of the British Watch and Clock Makers' Guild. However, a very interesting discussion on the point occurred at the last monthly meeting. One of the members raised the question by relating that he was often asked by his customers whether it were better to wind a watch at night or in the morning. To many of us winding a watch at night comes as naturally as putting off one's boots, but expert opinion seems to be that it would be better to do away with this ancient custom and do the winding in the morning. Mr. Wright, the vice-president of the Guild, put it in this way: that during the day-time the watch was carried about and subjected to all kinds of irregular conditions, which it is better able to withstand when fully wound. At night it is laid in a horizontal position, usually beneath the owner's pillow, and can tick happily without any of the excitement which it meets when it is being carried about in the pocket. The majority of the members of the trade, therefore, agree that the best time for winding a watch is in the morning, although they quite recognise the force of the argument that then the main spring would be colder and more brittle than after the watch had been carried about all day.

On Ashdown Forest, ancient hunting-ground of John of Gaunt and of Royal folk before him, they have lately been

hunting the buck (also the doe and anything that they might find in shape of a fallow deer) if not precisely *more antiquo*, then in any manner that seemed likely to compass the death of the deer. These deer are certain ones, or their descendants, which escaped from Buckhurst Park and have defied attempts at capture or destruction in the extensive woodland warrens by which the actual forest, which is bare of any large timber, is cut up. The deer are now being hunted by a pack of harriers, aided and abetted by every gunner of the country, well armed with all sorts of weapons, from the modern double-barrelled "hammerless" to the converted musket. It is to be understood that this is a work of extermination in the first instance. The idea of sport is only subsidiary, so that the strict rules of the game need not be observed. The deer are very destructive to crops, and may become a serious trouble if allowed to increase, and have very much more than a fair chance of getting off scot-free in the big woods, no matter what array of gunners, hounds and horsemen be brought against them. It is an array such as should gladden the heart of Mr. Haldane, could he behold it, with visions of a territorial army in being.

The tragic accident in the hunting-field to Mr. Hugh Owen, only a little less known, and not at all less popular, than his brother "Roddy," who met a similarly premature fate, will be very deeply and widely lamented. The present year has been remarkable for the number of fatal accidents in the hunting-field, and in a curiously large percentage of the cases the victims have been more or less well-known men. The occasion of

Mr. Owen's fatality is described as a fence with a wide ditch on the far side. Usually, when fatal accidents have occurred to men who are accomplished horsemen, the occasion seems to have been some very low fence or trifling obstacle at which they have ridden carelessly. That, however, is an explanation which does not appear to fit the sad case of Mr. Hugh Owen. It is a comfort to think that his death was almost certainly free from suffering.

The Board of Agriculture and Fisheries has lately added to its excellent series of leaflets a special one on fumigation with hydrocyanic acid gas for the destruction of various kinds of vermin which attack floral-life. The leaflet gives every information as to the different modes of fumigation applicable in different cases to young nursery trees, greenhouses and poultry-houses. This treatment is efficacious in destroying the vermin which harbour in the fowl-pens, as well as those, such as thrips, scale insects, aphids, red spider, etc., which are special enemies of plant-life. It is pointed out that this fumigation, if properly carried out, is effective against insects in every stage of their life history except that of the egg. It is by no means the first time that fumigation with this gas has been advocated in one or another of the Board's leaflets dealing with injurious insects, but it is only now that the method seems to have been deemed of importance entitling it to a leaflet by itself. It hardly needs to be said that this, like the rest of the series, may be obtained gratis by sending unstamped a request to the Board at Whitehall Place.

HORSES ON THE FARM.

SOME weeks ago the present writer was talking over the outlook with an aged resident in one of the best farming districts in Eastern England. He was an old gentleman, well over his three-score and ten, and he had gained a competency by supplying agricultural requisites. Few people possess such excellent opportunities as he does for knowing the financial status of his neighbours. He gave it as his opinion that for the last two or three years farmers had done much better than for a long time before that. As illustrating this, he instanced the number of them who had recently purchased motors, and he said that in the great market towns the

number of motors arriving at the principal inns on a market day was at least as great as that of the carriages. One bearing of this information struck the hearer afterwards, although he missed it at the moment. It is that if this were to go on, farmers would be able to dispense with the useful riding nag which used to be essential. The old gentleman's memory carried him a long way back, and incidentally he gave a picture of a steading as it was about the middle of last century. Horses were then very much more needed. They were used among other things for threshing, the machinery being driven by their power. Probably to-day there is not a single horse-driven threshing-machine left.



W. Reid.

TURNING ON THE HEADLAND.

Copyright.

Carting, too, was a far bigger undertaking on the farm than it is now. Grain, potatoes and other farm produce had to be taken long distances to the station; seed-cake, and occasionally manure, had to travel equally far back to the farm. To-day the tendency is wherever possible to substitute machinery for horse-flesh. Steam threshes the corn, and performs a hundred other tasks that they used to do. Moreover, not only have the main lines of railways been stretched out till they come in contact with the most distant and remote farms, but hundreds of light railways have been built for the express purpose of touching those districts which had to depend on horse carriage previously. No doubt, in a little while mechanical power will be employed for many acts of husbandry. It is said, for instance, that the manufacturers of a well-known agricultural motor are so deep in orders that it will take them several years to execute them. This motor ploughs, sows, reaps and does several other things which before were done by man with the help of horses. These circumstances taken together must go a long way towards accounting for the diminution of horses kept for agricultural purposes. Much, no doubt, is still in the stage of experiment. What the farmer wants to find out exactly is the relative cost. There can no longer be any doubt as to the efficiency and adaptability of mechanical power to farmwork. Its drawback lies in the cost of working and upkeep. No figures are yet available whereby these can be compared with the cost and maintenance of horse-flesh. Some points of comparison are, however, so obvious that it is almost impossible to avoid seeing them. The horse costs less to the farmer. This is true when it is purchased in the market, but in many cases it can be reared on the land at an outlay which it is scarcely possible to put into figures. All corn, hay and other food is obtained at the price required to grow it; not a farthing has gone to any middleman's profit. Secondly, although the horse eats its daily rations, its cost per week is very much less than that of any motor or steam machine. On the other side of the balance, a horse can only do a strictly limited amount of work in a day. It may be a good traveller, able, say, at an emergency to haul a cart from twenty to forty miles, but after the day's work it requires a rest—it is of little or no use the day after. The motor may and often does break down, but there is no tiring

there is no longer anything like the need for horses on the farm that there used to be, and in the future the tiller of the soil is likely to become more independent of them instead of less. There is another side to the picture, however. Horses have this advantage—that as well as forming part of the labour equipment of the farm, they are in themselves valuable livestock, which, in some cases at least, may be bred and reared on



C. F. Grindrod.

THE REMAINS OF THE RICK.

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a profitable basis. What the farmer has to consider in regard to these is the kind of horses that would be most profitable to him. If he has a motor, it is tolerably evident that he will have less need of the "bit of blood" that he used to favour, and experience has told him that raising blood-stock is not a very paying business for him, whatever may be the case at the great studs of the country. The horse that is profitable to the farmer is the Shire, Clydesdale or Suffolk that can be used for ordinary

fieldwork. In at least ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the tenant of a moderate-sized holding finds his best equipment to be a number of well-bred mares, such animals as can be picked up on fairly reasonable terms at big Shire sales; that is to say, mares which have no constitutional defect, but which, nevertheless, would stand no chance in a show-yard. If he possess mares of this description, there are plenty of opportunities now afforded by county and other societies for mating them with stallions of the very first quality. In that case, the foals are practically certain to be valuable beasts of burden, either for farmwork or for sale as town dray-horses, and there is always an off-chance that out of several foals there will be one which commands a very high price from connoisseurs of the pedigree cart-horse. The export trade in these animals is also an expanding one, so that little difficulty need be experienced in turning them into money. The



HEAVY HAULING.

farmer who takes this view will, naturally, feel shy about taking up the breeding of light horses. At the present moment we know a farmer who possesses a four year old thorough-bred filly. It came into his hands in an accidental manner that need not be described here; but the point is that this animal has simply been allowed to roll over the grass, and has never done an hour's work for her keep. The man

it, and the machinery is becoming so much perfected year by year that the chances of a breakdown are much less than they used to be. It is too soon to say how long the machinery will last or to compare its term of existence with that of horses, but the machine ought to be the longer lived. However, our business at the present moment is not to go into these questions of detail, highly interesting though they are. It is enough to show that



A. H. Robinson.

A ROLLER TEAM.

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raises a number of heavy horses annually, and is now anxious to dispose of her, but has been unable to find a purchaser who would give the price he asks—no immoderate one. Supposing that the Government were to purchase the animal; at something over four years of age the price they give is £40. It would not repay the farmer for the risk and trouble, and hence he is very much against breeding light horses. In all this, of course, we are speaking mostly about those who have to make a living from the land, and only succeed in doing so by the exercise of industry and frugality.

Luckily for Great Britain one of the most salient characteristics of our country is its infinite variety. The diversity of soil and circumstances renders all generalities open to important exceptions. Some years ago the farmers in Wales set an excellent example by taking up seriously the breeding of horses for London traffic; another district may possibly be pioneer to a different movement. Diversity is the mother of enterprise.

When a man is making his fortune he can indulge in a number of fancies from which a working farmer is debarred. Moreover, the tenant is bound to consider on each occasion the character of his own holding. One farm may consist of a comparatively small number of acres of rich heavy land, which when well worked will give high results. Probably horse-breeding of any kind would be less profitable here than other forms of agriculture. But a second farmer may be tenant of a very large holding of light grassland, and to him the rearing of horses may be not only a pleasure, but a source of profit. The fact is that no one can maintain hard-and-fast rules on the subject. It is the local conditions that determine the most remunerative manner in which to employ land. But in a highly-cultivated country like England, where the land is, as a rule, of a high degree of fertility, there would seem to be many forms of the husbandman's art that are still more remunerative than is that of breeding and rearing horses. In those places where horses furnish a trustworthy source of income, it will generally be found that the



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

BREASTING A BRAE.

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most suitable breed is that which has almost constant employment on the land. In view of recent experiences no one can contend for a moment that anything is to be gained by keeping the weedy and valueless horses that at one time seemed to content the eye of the farmer. They eat just as much as the pedigree animals, and they are just as liable to fail or to fall ill, while it is useless to hope that the stock that comes from them will be in the slightest degree better than the sire or dam.

FROM THE FARMS.

THE EQUIPMENT OF A SMALL HOLDING.

FROM Lilleshall Lodge, Newport, Mr. Stamer writes to ask for further particulars regarding Sir John Dorington's figures for equipping a small holding. He gives the following interesting account of his own experience:

"For a ten-acre holding, all grass, on the Lilleshall Estate, I had last year to build a house and buildings. The house consisted of parlour, kitchen, larder, wash-house and dairy, with three bedrooms, brick-built and tiled. The buildings consisted of two pigsties, one-stall stable and corn store, accommodation for

repiy to Mr. Courthope, he said he believed that the price sometimes asked for foreign hops was less than the cost of production. The extent of the grubbing up that has taken place in the Kentish hop-fields is estimated at from 8 per cent. to 15 per cent. In Sussex it has been from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent., but the case is not so bad in Worcestershire and Herefordshire. In 1907, it seems that 100,000 adults and 50,000 children were engaged in hop-picking, in addition to a large number of home pickers and some 1,000 gipsies and their children. Mr. Rew would not admit that the crisis depended upon the import of foreign hops, but said that the use of hops had been decreasing while, at the same time, the production per year had increased. According to another witness examined, we grow about 600,000 cwt. in this country and import 200,000 cwt., or a quarter of the quantity used. Prices are very variable, sometimes being as low as 50s. per cwt., sometimes as high as 10 guineas. He gave the cost of production at £43 per acre—£10 to £12 for cultivation, £10 to £12 for picking, £10 to £12 for manures, wire, string, etc., £2 10s. to £3 for rent, rates and tithes, and £5 as interest on outlay on buildings. He attributed the decline of cultivation partly to foreign imports and partly to cold storage, which allowed of the crops raised in a



W. Reid.

NEEDING NO REIN TO GUIDE THEM HOME.

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four cows, a loose box for calves or pigs and a lean-to shed for cart, also brick-built kiln. The cost, exclusive of well-sinking, road-making and fencing, was £400. I do not see how the tenant, if he is to make a holding of this sort pay, can do with less accommodation, and I do not think the house and buildings could have been erected at less cost if they have to meet the requirement of the authorities and to be really well built." Referring to the letter of Sir John Dorington, who writes that he estimated £500 for a forty-acre holding, of which the house would cost £250 and the buildings and fencing as much, making £500, we find that Mr. Stamer's building has been cheaper. The accommodation provided by Sir John Dorington is exactly the same as that which Mr. Stamer describes.

THE DECAY OF HOP-GROWING.

Much information of a very useful kind is being given to the Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to enquire into the past and present condition of the hop industry. Mr. R. H. Rew, who now holds the place Major Craigie used to hold on the Board of Agriculture, gives what may be called the official facts and statistics. He states that, from the tables drawn up, there was some indication that the use of hops in the production of beer was decreasing, but this did not amount to a certainty. In

cheap year being kept till a dear one came. It would seem, from the account given by the witnesses, that the land which is thrown out of hop cultivation is, for the most part, turned into orchards and gardens for the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. In cases where it is planted with trees, it is extremely unlikely that it will ever go back to hops.

TRAP-NESTS AND LAYING STRAINS.

It is now some ten years since trap-nests were first introduced, but they have made very little way, and are still used by only a small minority of poultry-keepers. Without their systematic use it is impossible to know how many eggs each individual hen has laid during the year. It is a simple matter to label every fowl by a ring round its leg with a number on it, and when releasing the bird from the nest to write this number on the egg in pencil; it only remains when the day's eggs are brought into the house to enter up these numbers on the monthly record sheet. To release the hens regularly during the day, and to make up the records every evening, take only a short time, while the knowledge gained is so valuable that one reads with surprise the comments that are still frequently made in the poultry Press on the doubtful advantages of trap-nests, and the impossibility of using them at all on a large scale. I have about three dozen in use, and it takes approximately half-an-hour a day

to attend to them, and perhaps ten minutes on an average to record the eggs in the evening. On a large scale, where sufficient nests for some 1,000 hens were used, it should not take a boy more than three hours a day to collect the eggs and release the hens. I have kept these records systematically for five years, and am convinced of the necessity of doing so. The first lesson they teach is not to breed from a hen who is a poor layer, and no one can know with any certainty that a hen is a poor layer unless trap-nests are used and records kept. On sorting out the hens in the summer before their moult, those that are worth keeping to breed from for the next season are easily selected. On referring to my records I find that even hens that have laid really well the first year seldom do much good the second. By using trap-nests you arrive at facts and eliminate guesswork. For instance, ten hens which averaged 173 eggs per bird in their pullet year, dropped to ninety-three eggs per bird the next year. The moult usually takes about three months. It is a generally accepted idea that this lasts only about six weeks, but I find on taking an average from ten of my 1906 hens that it works out at about twelve weeks. The shortest time I have on record is seven weeks, and the longest sixteen. When hens are accustomed to trap-nests they invariably go into them when they

are broody, and as they are frequently turned off during the day their broodiness soon disappears. This results in practically breeding out broodiness, and must be counted a considerable advantage. As a matter of fact, this year out of thirty Wyandottes hardly one was broody for a day; three generations of parents having been taken off the nests almost as soon as they went into them has caused their descendants to lose all inclination for broodiness. By adding up the records and comparing them with those of the corresponding month of the previous year, you can see whether the hens are producing the average number of eggs, or more or less. If any hen's number does not appear on the sheet for a day or two during the laying months, it is well to be able to notice that she is not laying, and to find out at once if anything is wrong with her. It is a general belief that all hens dislike trap-nests, and will only lay in them under protest. Assuming that the trap-nest is simple and efficient, this is by no means the case. With those I use 90 per cent. of the hens lay their first eggs in the nests, and it is very unusual to find eggs in the houses, except in the months when the birds are laying so heavily that there are not enough nests to go round, and in this case the poultry-keeper is obviously to blame, and not the hens or the nests.

MARY BESANT.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THERE is no writer of our time in whose career and intellectual development a keener interest is felt than in that of Mr. Galsworthy. He belongs to the type of those who are continually developing. There are some men of intellect, writers and others, who come to maturity comparatively early and, as it were, are brought up with a full stop. In politics we can see it exemplified in a preceding generation in the persons of Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone. John Bright reached the highest point of his career before he had quite entered upon middle age, and his later efforts did not compare favourably with those of his early maturity. Mr. Gladstone, on the contrary, went on assimilating and growing almost to the hour of his death. We are not at all concerned here with the rightness or wrongness of his views and principles, but only with the fact of that steady growth. In literature the phenomenon is still more common. Tennyson expanded till the hour of his death, whereas how often does the young poet flower soon after he comes of age, and turn prosaic and matter-of-fact before his years number two-score. Mr. Galsworthy, then, belongs to the order of those who are continually growing and developing. His later books, particularly "The Country House," show a ripeness of intellect that will be sought for in vain among the less noticeable books which he published some years ago. Among the latter was one which he has revised and fitted out with a preface. It is named *The Island Pharisees* (Heinemann), and his preface is devoted chiefly to an explanation of this phrase. On the Shakespearean principle that good wine needs no bush, the ordinary reader has a rooted and well-grounded objection to prefaces in general; yet he knows that the rule is not absolute. Occasionally it would appear that, although a large bush is used in advertisement, the wine is excellent. Henry Fielding not only delighted in writing prefaces, but he scattered a great number of these essays through his volume, explaining not only the general scope of his work, but its individual parts; and these essays are now an essential part of English literature. Le Sage, again, prefixed to "Gil Blas" what is perhaps the most delightful little preface ever written to a novel. Yet with these examples in our mind it is impossible to believe that Mr. Galsworthy is felicitous in his attempt to explain the scope and purposes of *The Island Pharisees*. He is a little too insistent upon the moral. Mr. Galsworthy is besieged by a troop of pronounced, not to say violent, opinions upon certain topics of the hour. Generally speaking, his attitude to life is that he regards men and women, according to the old and well-known metaphor, as engaged in making a pilgrimage from the cradle to the grave. Endless multitudes have passed along the way before, each but once, and the vast majority of those who follow keep to the well-worn path trodden by the feet of their predecessors—in other words, the human race has, out of its long experience, built up strict conventions. Yet they are not so rigidly constructed but that the trodden path is susceptible to modification. Mr. Galsworthy's own words are:

The conditions that dictate our education, the distribution of our property, our marriage laws, amusements, worship, prisons and all other things, change imperceptibly from hour to hour; the moulds containing them, being inelastic, do not change, but hold on to the point of bursting, and then are hastily, often clumsily, enlarged.

He goes on to point out that the human race may be divided into two parts, those who submit to these conventions and those who rebel against them, and he says with exaggeration that

Each party has invented for the other the hardest names that it can think of: Philistines, Bourgeois, Mrs. Grundy—Rebels, Anarchists and Ne'er-do-weels.

We say the statement is exaggerated because, in point of fact, those nick-names are applied only to the extremists on either side. The typical bourgeois or puritan is one who holds that the conventions in social and co-operative life are as adamant as the laws of Nature; but the general sense of the world has always been a corrective of that view. So, again, those who claim a licence for themselves and set all laws and all conventions at defiance have been not justly stigmatised with some of the epithets which the novelist recalls. This really touches upon the essential difference. Those who set out to find new paths for themselves with deliberate judgment come under a very different category from the far greater number who wantonly and licentiously set precedent and example at defiance. What these considerations lead to is the part that the novelist himself ought to play. It may be, of course, that he considers himself a teacher and uses his tale simply as a parable for the purpose of enforcing a moral or political lesson; but we do not think Mr. Galsworthy would accept that definition of his rôle. In the following sentence he shows what at least he would like to do:

But now and then—ah! very seldom—we find ourselves so near that thing which has no breadth, the middle line, that we can watch them both, and positively smile to see the fun.

It is a very frank and honest confession, and, therefore, entirely in keeping with Mr. Galsworthy's character and work. But it is none the less true that the artist should never leave that middle line; he has no business to be in either of the "choruses of name-slingers." His business is to hold the mirror up to Nature faithfully, and to let the moral take care of itself—in other words, to begin with a pre-formed opinion is the sure way to distortion. The fixed judgment of our author is that the tide of progress is not carrying woman along with it. His mind is full of the injustices, cruelties and agonies that are heaped upon the "erring sister." His is a fine and generous attitude, and we do not think that anyone who has carefully and impartially considered the matter will disagree in principle with the conclusions at which he has evidently arrived. He has also this in his favour—that he is working towards a good end, and yet his novel as a novel suffers from a certain intellectual lopsidedness. After all, the great writers of the past have pictured women sinned against and sinning with a wise and kind and tolerant sympathy that makes no attempt to mount a platform and preach on and to them. This author seems to have had an idea, when constructing the story, that each one of us lives on an island. Somewhere else a writer has pointed out that what we call animals are rooted as well as vegetables. He likens wild things to creatures tethered to a lair or nesting-place by invisible threads that only allow them to sway hither and thither as corn is swayed by the breeze, and that man himself lives in his own small world or intellectual parish. It is a revelation to the hero of the book—who has been brought up in refinement and luxury and is engaged to a girl shut up in the small, pure world of her class—when he is brought into contact with the fallen irresponsible and Bohemian. Much of the charm of the book, and it has a great deal of charm, is due to the surprise created by the unexpected sensations produced by such a contact. Had Mr. Galsworthy been a French novelist instead of an English

one, it is possible that he might have resolved life into something still more elementary; but no one, of recent years at all events, has had the courage and capacity to do this. In France it was attempted by M. Zola, but in his laboriousness he lost the fine literary *esprit* which characterised his early work, and so produced enormous tracts instead of literature. We do not think that Mr. Galsworthy is at all likely to fall into this error, because, as we have already said, his later books are so much in advance of his earlier.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE

A RETURN TO WINTER.

AFTER an altogether exceptional February, winter is once more upon us, and the wildest snowstorm of the season is being experienced. An average depth of 2ft. of snow has fallen, and huge drifts have rendered the roads quite impassable, and in some cases trains have been embedded in the wreaths for nearly twenty-four hours. After the summer-like conditions of mid-February, all wild life is feeling the change severely, especially as many of the moorland nesting birds had arrived at the uplands before the storm broke. Both the lapwings and oyster-catchers this season made new records for their arrival at their nesting haunts, as the former were noted on February 12th and the latter on February 20th. In an average season the lapwings do not go inland till the end of February, and the oyster-catchers are seldom seen at their nesting sites till early March, so that this year they are at least a fortnight earlier than usual. In spite of the fine weather I did not hear a single missel-thrush in song till February 13th, and have not as yet heard the blackbird. The chaffinches, however, are singing their full powerful song, as are also the song-thrushes, and on February 20th I saw a starling with building material in its bill; but as late as March 5th the black-headed gulls were still near the coast, although the majority were in breeding plumage.

THE FISHING SEASON: A DISAPPOINTING OPENING.

On February 8th, when I last wrote these notes, everything seemed in favour of an exceptionally good opening of the rod-fishing on the Dee; but so far expectations have not by any means been realised. The weather on the opening day was perfect, with a mild, south-west wind, and the water in splendid order, and yet the results were most disappointing. Personally, I did not see a single fish, and many of the beats yielded nothing. On one beat on the mid-reaches not a single clean-run fish was killed during the first five days, although five rods were out daily, but kelts in numbers were met with. About the middle of the month, however, a grilse of 4½lb. was killed—a very unusual event for the season of the year. Several of the fishing tenants have left in disgust and handed over their rods to the gillies. On the Spey the results have been equally poor; but kelts seem everywhere very abundant, and on one beat as many as thirty-five were landed on the opening day. The clean-run fish have been of small size as a rule, from 6lb. to 8lb., although one or two very fine fish of over 20lb. have been landed. At present the rivers are in indifferent order, with a good deal of grue on the water, and sport cannot improve till more favourable weather conditions set in. Sea-trout seem plentiful, however, and some very good baskets have been got. In one instance an angler lost a large sea-trout, which broke away with his hook and part of the cast. Three hours later the same trout, with hook and cast in its mouth, was landed by another fisher. The first hook was extracted; the worm on it was found to be in good order, and a very short time after this same worm landed another large sea-trout.

A GIANT LARCH TREE.

A larch tree has just been cut down on the Atholl estates at Dunkeld which has an extremely interesting history. It is of the species known as *Larix Europæa* and was 170 years old. It was the largest larch tree in Scotland, and was also the first of these trees to be planted in this country. When measured in 1888 its height was 102ft. 4in., and the circumference 3ft. from the ground was as much as 17ft. 2in. It is not generally known that the larch is not a native of Scotland, but has only found a footing there within comparatively recent times, although it seems to find the climate and soil of that country greatly to its liking.

BLUE HARES IN THE HIGHLANDS.

Where the golden eagle and the fox are not too abundant, there is little doubt that the blue or mountain hare is increasing every year. On some of the hills they may literally be said to swarm, and when a hare-drive is engaged in enormous numbers are sometimes bagged—as many as 700 in a single day. It is stated that some fifteen years ago Highland proprietors found their stock of blue hares decreasing at an alarming rate, and instructions were issued to the keepers to wage war against the "vermin" of the mountain forests and moorlands. The "vermin" consisted mainly of the eagle and the fox, and the former at all events had a very bad time of it. I am of opinion, however, that the chief reason for the increase of the mountain hare is the

fact that nowadays grouse-shooting over dogs has been for the most part abandoned in favour of grouse-driving. During a drive the blue hares, when disturbed by the beaters, make for the hill-tops, instead of running into the line of fire, and thus comparatively few are bagged. During the winter many hare-drives take place on the hills, and are taken part in by the keepers, farmers and probably also the local doctor and minister, if they be sportsmen. The guns some of the farmers bring with them look as though they had been made in the year one, but accidents rarely happen; this is due possibly as much to luck as anything else.

CARRYING POWERS OF THE GOLDEN EAGLE.

The golden eagle has enormous strength in its talons. An instance is given of one of these birds carrying a lamb the extraordinary distance of twenty-five miles to its eyrie. Whether this story is authentic or not, undoubted instances are on record of eagles carrying off lambs to their young, and a few years ago a Highland shepherd saw an eagle attack and wound two lambs and carry away a third. A few years ago, an immense sensation was created by the news that an eagle had carried off to its eyrie the baby of a crofter. The story was published in many of the newspapers, but was ultimately discovered to be absolutely without foundation. A mountain hare seems to make no difference to the eagle's flight, and the king of birds sometimes swoops down on the luckless hare and bears it off, with no perceptible slackening of its flight. An eagle will often go for a weak or wounded deer, and if there is a precipice near will always try to heal the animal towards it, often with success. An eagle has been said to have swooped on a salmon in the act of leaping up a fall, but probably in this case the eagle was mistaken for an osprey.

THE LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE.

As far as my experience goes, this charming little bird is decreasing in the Highlands, and for the last two or three years I have not seen a single nest of the species. In winter flocks of them are of fairly common occurrence; but towards spring they disappear, and during the summer months are rarely seen. Long-tailed tits are very conspicuous on account of their exceptionally long tails, and when brooding the hen sits on her eggs with her tail bent round, so that it protrudes from the nesting hole just above the bird's head. The nest of the long-tailed tit is extremely beautiful, being composed of lichens on the outside, while the inside is lined with great numbers of feathers, forming a soft bed for the young birds. When they have young the parent birds are extraordinarily tame and enter the nest while the intruder is standing only a few feet off, paying absolutely no attention to him. The call-note of the long-tailed tit is quite unlike the calls of the other species of titmice, and closely resembles the harsh, jarring cry of the missel-thrush, only, of course, the notes are not so loud. I have often wondered why the long-tailed tit never comes to feed on the cocoanuts along with its relations the blue and great tits. Apparently this food has no attractions for the squeegee—as the long-tailed tit is locally known in Scotland—for I have never once seen a single individual in the vicinity of the cocoanuts, although the other titmice are feeding on them constantly through the day.

SETON P. GORDON.

THE COTTESMORE HOUNDS.

THE Cottesmore hounds, like those of the Quorn, have had a varied history. As a Hunt the Cottesmore goes back a long way. But the pack first comes into hound history under the care of the Lowther family. The first Lord Lonsdale started, like the Dukes of Beaufort, with hounds of the old staghound type—big, square-headed hounds with wiry coats. Writers of those days thought the Lowther pack coarse, and they were regarded as slow by the



W. A. Rouch.

GILLSON WITH THE BITCH PACK.

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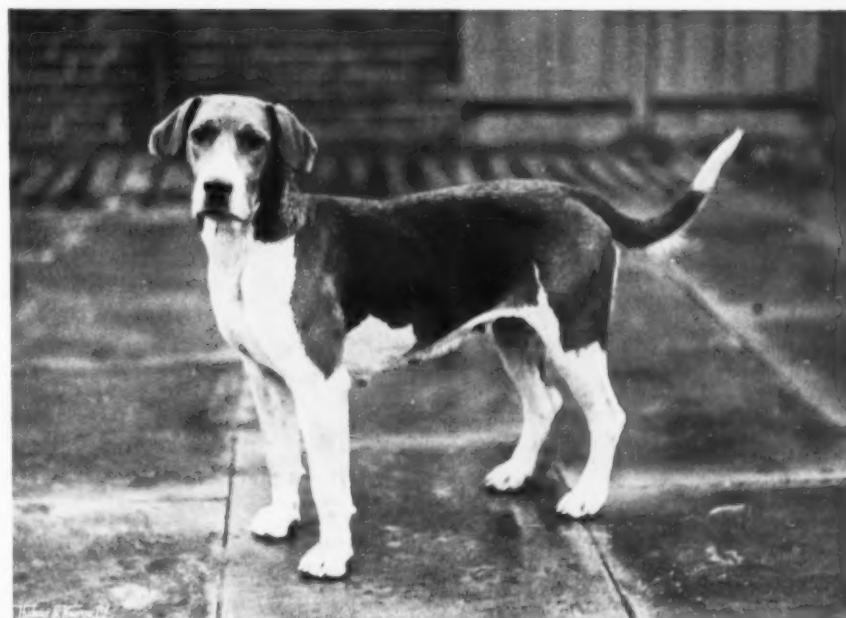
Melton men, who, however, seem to have hunted with them regularly. I suspect that the country had something to do with this. The Cottesmore country has wild, rough tracts, some plough in the east, and not a few strong woodlands. Probably in early days the country was rougher and wilder than it is now, and it must always have been a more difficult country to cross than the Quorn. But its roughness is in favour of sport; the woodlands breed stout foxes, and its limits include some of the best scenting ground in the Midlands. There are parts which are unsurpassed as a riding ground, and Nimrod writes that Woodwell Head was surrounded by "a champaign grazing district in which if a fox gets out of covert he must fly for his life." Teigh, Market Overton and Whissendine districts "appear to be laid out for fox-hunting," he goes on. There is in the east a country of quite a different aspect. Plough is common, big drains come in the line often enough, and there are some heavy, strong woodlands and steep hills on the Leicestershire side. All this makes it clear that the hounds must be able to hunt as well as race. They must be resolute as well as speedy. Their shoulders and feet must be of the best, or they will soon knock themselves to pieces, and they must have stamina, for long days are the rule and the foxes take a great deal of catching. The first Cottesmore pack, then, were big, powerful hounds. The third Lord Lonsdale, who had managed hounds before his father's death, infused more pace and quality. At this time the Cottesmore pack showed great sport, and gave to Belvoir as much as they received. Unfortunately, in 1842 this pack was sold. Then, after Sir Richard Sutton and Mr. Henley Greaves had hunted the country for some years, Sir John Trollope (Lord Kesteven) took the country, and from 1855 to 1857 hunted it with Mr. Drake's pack from the Bicester Hunt. When Mr. Drake reclaimed his pack, Sir John had clearly in his mind the sort of hound needed for his country, and he founded the present pack. In the first instance he bought drafts from countries noted for their working hounds—Belvoir, Lord Fitzhardinge's, Sir Watkin Wynn's, Lord Henry Bentinck's and, somewhat later, from the Bicester (Mr. Drake's). With such a foundation to work upon, and a clear idea of what he wanted, Sir John Trollope soon had a working pack of hounds exactly suited to the Cottesmore. Perhaps Seaman and Primate were the two best known of his breeding. The blood of the former can still be traced in the Belvoir kennels, and Mr. Fenwick looked on the latter as one of the fathers of the Tynedale. Mr. Baird succeeded, and with George Gillson (the father of the present huntsman) improved on this pack. The standard of height was lowered, a great deal of Belvoir blood was introduced and they made a hit with Warrior, by Milton Weathergaze, by Belvoir Weathergaze, a very noted worker and sire of working hounds. Mr. Baird had also a very beautiful bitch pack by the early nineties with which the Leicestershire country was hunted. No hounds ever had more beauty and fashion, and their necks and shoulders were very perfect. If they had a fault, it was that they were a little light of tongue, and in woods like Tilton Wood it was easy to be left. Then came a time when distemper swept away many of the best puppies, and the Cottesmore suffered heavily. They, however, had still an excellent dog pack, and in the cub-hunting season of, I think, 1901 or 1902, these hounds, with Thatcher as huntsman, went out and killed every hunting morning for a month, and that in the woodlands where the cubs take some catching. But still the pack needed strengthening, and Mr. Evan Hanbury bought half of Captain Johnstone's pack. The hounds had done good work in a difficult Yorkshire country. Their quality, too, may be inferred from the fact that Mr. Wroughton's share of the pack included Spanker, the sire of Sampler, the Peterborough Cup-winner of 1907, and no doubt the same line of blood—that of Holder-ness Steadfast and Warwickshire Gaffer—came



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WHIMSEY.

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DAECHICK.

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into the Cottesmore kennels by the purchase of Captain Johnstone's hounds. To keep up the Cottesmore tradition of breeding from working blood we may note that some of the Fitzhardinge blood was introduced into the Cottesmore kennels some seasons back.

When the present Lord Lonsdale took the Cottesmore at the beginning of the season 1907-8, with Gillson as huntsman, it was felt that the pack would go on in the course begun. Lord Lonsdale has owned several packs, and each one has been noted for looks and work. It so happened that Mr. Reginald Corbet's famous pack of South Cheshire bitches was in the market, and Lord Lonsdale bought them for 1,800 guineas. These hounds are full of Belvoir blood and quality, and it would not be easy to pick out a more beautiful bitch than the rich-coloured Tarnish (the dam of Sampler, by the way). In all our gallery of foxhounds it would be difficult to find a better combination of character, quality and bone. With the judgment of the present Master to guide her alliances she may well help to found a great family of foxhounds. Warble and Whimsey look to be almost as good, and all three can hunt and race



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AT THE VOICE OF THE HUNTSMAN.

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TALENT: A GOOD YOUNGSTER,

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and have great bone for bitches. Turning to the dog hounds, Dabchick is a hound of a notable type, but, perhaps, handsome as he is, Talent gives one an even greater impression of power and pace. He is said to be promising. I have seldom seen promise that to all appearance looks more likely to be fulfilled.

The group of the bitch pack may be taken as a model of Leicestershire hounds. The single head is an admirable study of foxhound character, and may be compared with those that have already appeared in these pages. The group called "At the Voice of the Huntsman" lets us into one secret of the mind of the foxhound. It is not food or even the friendship of mankind which is the ruling passion of the hound, but the chase. Every face has written on it, "You surely wouldn't leave me behind," and if anyone thinks this is fanciful, let him see a pack of hounds streaming out on a hunting morning and listen to the doleful howls and piteous whines of those left behind. The foxhound's whole mind is on the chase. Anyone who has fed hounds constantly knows that the greedy hounds are the exception, and that food takes a very secondary place with the best. Highly-bred, highly-strung foxhounds give us far more trouble by lack of eagerness at feeding-time than

by greediness. Indeed, in my own experience, I should say that the best hounds are more often than not shy and delicate feeders, while the hound that stokes himself rather than feeds is not of much account. Possibly the present kennel food, especially since good oatmeal is hard to get, is partly in fault, and a ration of raw fresh, lean meat might give stamina and drive to delicate hounds. Once more, as we look over these pictures, we see how the Belvoir type is predominating in our kennels, and gradually absorbing the others. The Belvoir colour is there, of course, and not only the marking, but the type. There are others, no doubt, but I know of only three kennels of note in which any distinctive type survives. There are doubters as to the wisdom of this tendency to breed hounds to a single type; but all the practical men, those who hunt hounds and show good sport, seem to agree that there are no workers like the Belvoir-bred ones; and if, as I sometimes think, it is change of soil, climate and environment which hounds need to give fresh vigour to the old blood, we have in our many Belvoir-bred packs all we need for outcrosses. If an example of the working power of the Cottesmore pack of to-day were needed, we could not do better than go back to Monday

and Tuesday, February 3rd and 4th, when both packs were out, Lord Lonsdale carrying the horn on both occasions. Bourn Wood is full of foxes, but the scent on neither day was remarkable; this perhaps was rather an advantage for testing the working power of the hounds. There was a great deal of covert work, and this it is which enables a hound to show the resolution, stamina, perseverance and nose which are so needful. Then, if hounds are to pack well in a wood, they must throw their tongues, and it is a body of hounds driving together in full cry that makes foxes leave the covert. If hounds are here, there and everywhere, if they never bring their forces to bear on the fox, they may kill him; covert-skirters often snap up a fox, but they will never drive him out if he wants to stay. In this case the fox had to go, and only saved his life by finding substitutes. This kind of work shows what hounds can do; it also makes them into a useful pack. Riding to hounds over the open is delightful, but no pack of hounds was ever made by



W. A. Rouch

A GRAND HEAD.

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work in the open only. It was the dog pack on the Monday, and on the Tuesday a mixed pack with a good sprinkling of the Cheshire bitches of which I have written. They spent the morning working the deep Loddington woodlands, and later ran a very varied line from Launde to Withcote and then to Owston and a wide ring out towards Marefield and back. As a test run for a pack this was capital. First deep and soggy woodlands; then a fox found and hunted out into the open; then a fresh fox sprang up, so that the handiness of the pack could be noted as they were got together, again on the line; then the fox went right through Owston Wood, a long and hollow covert which tested their drive; then out into the open over good scenting grass; then rough marshy ground, hill and vale, and once more back into Owston Wood with their beaten fox. It was a great hound day, and showed how useful a pack the Cottesmore are now, and fills us with hope of what, with continuity of policy in the kennel, they may become.

X.

THE INCUBATION OF SEA-BIRDS' EGGS.

I WAS informed by several well-known naturalists that the period of incubation of the eggs of sea-birds had not been authenticated, and as they appeared to think that this information would be of considerable interest, and I happened to be living on the Farne Islands off the Northumberland Coast during the spring and summer of 1907, conducting a series of experiments on the growth and cost of rearing chickens, I took the opportunity of obtaining, as far as I could, this information by placing in my incubator (hot air) the eggs of those varieties of sea-birds which, year by year, come to these islands in order to lay their eggs and rear their young. The following is a list of the eggs I used and the number of days taken for incubation:

Arctic tern	...	...	...	...	Twenty days.
Sandwich tern	...	...	...	...	Twenty days.
Herring-gull	...	...	...	...	Twenty-one days.
Lesser black-backed gull	...	...	...	...	Twenty-one days.
Oyster-catcher	...	...	...	...	Twenty-one days.
Ring-dotterel	...	...	...	...	Twenty-five days.
Razor-bill	...	...	...	...	Twenty-five days.
Eider-duck	...	...	...	...	Thirty-one days.
Guillemot	...	...	...	...	Thirty-two days.
Puffin	...	...	...	...	Thirty-six days.

The heat was maintained throughout as near 104deg. as possible, and the following precautions were taken in order to ensure that the eggs were fresh:

- Razor-bill.—These birds are practically a new species to the Farne Islands. The present colony, containing six pairs, have only made these islands their breeding quarters during the past three or four years. The Farne Island Bird Protection Society are anxious that they shall become permanent visitors, and particular care is therefore taken that they shall not be disturbed. Razor-bills only lay one egg, consequently I did not feel justified in taking more than one; and although I cannot be absolutely certain, yet I believe this one was fresh. Later on I was pleased to observe that the bird which laid this egg laid another, and successfully reared and took away its young one.
- Puffins.—These birds also only lay one egg in rabbit-holes. I took eight from different holes, all on the same day, and those which hatched out last I accepted as giving the correct period.
- Herring-gulls.—I used several eggs taken from nests in which only one had been laid.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull.—I took the same precaution as with the herring-gull.
- Oyster-catcher.—I took two eggs from one nest, and broke one which was perfectly fresh.
- Eider-duck.—The same as with oyster-catcher.
- Ring-dotterel.—The same as with oyster-catcher.

Guillemot.—This egg was picked up on the main rock the morning after it was laid.

Sandwich Tern.—These eggs were taken early in the season from nests where there was only one egg.

Arctic Tern.—The same as Sandwich tern.

Therefore, with the exception of the razor-bill, I have every confidence in believing that the periods given are the correct ones. In order to ascertain how long they took from the time they were hatched until they learnt how to fly, and to watch and to ascertain their method of practising, I, in 1906, reared three lesser black-backed gulls, and in 1907 one herring and one lesser black-backed gull. Under ordinary conditions the parent birds, of course, teach their young by example, but my gulls had no parents to teach them, and therefore had to learn by instinct. I did not observe them make the slightest attempt until they were forty-six days old. Then their first method of practising seemed to me to be to wait until there was a brisk breeze blowing, the rate of which I estimated to be about fifteen miles per hour, to take up a position on an elevated ledge of rock, stretch out their wings and allow the wind to lift them up 2ft. or 3ft., coming down perhaps 6ft. or 8ft. away. After practising in this way over a period of from one week to ten days, evidently gaining more and more confidence, and learning better how to manipulate their wings so as to balance themselves, they took to the water. Holding on with their beaks to the ends of the long seaweed which floated on the surface, they again stretched out their wings, adjusted them to the proper angle and allowed the wind by its own energy to lift them out of the water; when they reached an elevation of from 3ft. to 4ft. and the weed would lift no higher, they let go and dropped back into the sea. They would practise like this, flying up and down as it were, by the hour; they never appeared to practise unless there was a stiff breeze blowing, and then not unless it was in a direction which produced a sure and steady air current. I did not notice any endeavour to flap their wings until they had learnt how to balance themselves, and it took at least a fortnight from the time I saw them make their first attempt until they could really fly, and probably a full month before they could fly at all well. The island has a gradual slope towards the east, and therefore when the wind was easterly there would be an upward current of rising air over the whole island, and it then became an ideal spot for practising soaring flight; in fact, whenever there was a suitable wind the young gulls from the adjacent islands would come in dozens and sail backwards and forwards, keeping in this upward current as if practising. My gulls never knew what a

mother was, and therefore looked upon me as their natural protector. When they were quite young, if I lay down on the grass they would come and nestle under my coat, pressing their little bodies as close to me as possible for warmth. As they grew older they would walk about with me, crying to me, asking, I suppose, for food. When they could fly they would fly round the island looking for me, and sometimes when I was fishing off the rocks at the extreme west point they would find me out, and, settling by me, watch with the greatest interest, hoping I should catch a fish, which, when I did, I cut up and gave to them to eat. I lived in an old tower on the island, and when working in the top storey with the window open I could see my gulls flying over the island looking for me. When they came within hearing distance I would call "Tommy, Tommy" (I named them Tommy); they would then fly round and round the tower, and each time as they passed the window would turn their heads, look in and call to me to come out.

During the autumn of 1906 I used one of these gulls in order to make what was to me an interesting experiment. I cut the feathers on one wing only, in order to ascertain how much I could take off without preventing it from flying. I only cut it gradually, taking off, perhaps, half an inch at once, and then gave it time to master flying under its altered conditions. I continued doing this for about two months, and by this time practically all its primary feathers on the one wing were gone, and yet it flew. The poor bird spent its life in practising. Each time I cut it would for a few days look miserable and ill, and walk about with ruffled feathers, evidently very unwell. It seemed as if the mere fact of cutting the feathers in some way hurt it. At length I felt quite sorry for it and left off cutting. It appeared to have great difficulty in starting, but once under way flew

fairly well. It had, however, to fly, as it were, on one side—that is, at an angle, evidently doing its best to obtain as much leverage with the cut, and as little with the uncut, wing as possible. Had I cut the wing right down at once, instead of cutting it gradually, I doubt very much if the bird would ever have flown. I kept this bird until the middle of November, and then, as it started to kill and eat my young chickens, I gave it to the boatman who brought over my stores. He took it home in a basket, and after cutting some more off its wing, so as to make quite certain that it could not fly, he shut it up in an outhouse. One evening, about a week later, the door was accidentally left open, and the bird escaped, and although there was a fierce storm raging, it found its way and swam across the three and a-half miles of sea which separated my island from the harbour, and the following morning when I came out there was Tommy waiting for me on the doorstep, nodding his head and crying out, evidently pleased and glad to see me. I kept him for another week, but he would eat my chickens, and although I was very sorry to part with him, as he was my only companion, I had to get rid of him, and this time I sent him right away to the South of England.

I tried to rear the razor-bill, and was successful until it was six weeks old, when, falling short of fresh fish, during a spell of bad weather I tried feeding it with salt. The result was fatal; it died within six hours. This bird also became wonderfully tame. It loved to be carried about, and when old enough I carried it down each morning to a sea-pool for a bath. It would swim round and round the pool after me. Whenever the door of my dwelling-house was left open, in it would come, walk upstairs and sit by the fire, whistling and chirpiag, apparently perfectly happy and quite at home. F. G. PAYSTER.

IN THE GARDEN.

IN THE TIME OF THE DAFFODIL.

OF late years, with a gradual awakening to all that is beautiful in gardening, the Daffodil, the sweetest flower of spring, has taken a firm hold—never, I hope, to be relaxed—of those who love the surroundings of their homes to be interesting in the four seasons of the year. In spring the Daffodil, now to be obtained in almost bewildering variety, flutters in the warm life-giving month of April, and such pictures as are given with these notes are not difficult or expensive to paint. After all, there is nothing original in this free planting of Daffodils in the grass or

woodland. It is simply copying Dame Nature herself, who sprinkles the mead with the wild Daffodil, which even the hybridist has not improved, heterodox as this may appear to the Narcissus enthusiast. But there are a winsomeness and purity of colour in our wild species that are denied to many of the hybrids that we hold in great affection. I am not minimising in the least degree the work that the hybridist has accomplished during recent years, the hybrids of Engleheart, Barr and others; but to me a meadow full of the wild Daffodil has a more alluring charm than the "Stellas" and others that will soon bend their dainty heads in the little fruit orchard in front of the house.



Miss M. Best.

DAFFODILS IN WOODLAND.

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It is interesting to notice the behaviour of bulbs planted in grass on a hot soil and in a well-prepared border. The bulbs that were planted in the grass four years ago have disappeared, and it is necessary to plant every autumn if one wishes for a continuance of those welcome little groups in mid-April. In two years the flowers are a shadow of their normal size, and frequently in three years only a few leaves indicate the position of the bulbs at all. "Stella" is the variety that has been most successful with me on a dry soil, and, old favourite though it may be, its slender stems and graceful, sweet-scented flowers are ever welcome in March—it is one of the first of its class to bloom. A large number of bulbs were planted as late as January last and are now in bud; the stems are short, but there will be flowers, with a promise next year of a more abundant display; after that, according to my experience, gradual deterioration, except in the made borders. One thing I never allow—cutting or the least disturbance of the foliage until it has quite decayed; and to this watchfulness I attribute the success of my Daffodils on a soil that does not accord quite with the fancy of the flower. The border has a woebegone look for some time, but this must be endured for the sake of the great spring beauty that has preceded the yellowing of the leaves. Strange to say, *Narcissus cernuus*, the nodding little creamy flower that is modesty itself, is very faithful, and is now mingling with the blue of the Siberian Scilla.

I am anxious to know the increase of Daffodils in meadow-land. Of course, everything depends upon the soil; but some varieties—Johnstoni, Queen of Spain, Sir Watkin, Emperor and Stella—as I have mentioned before, are most constant. The Pheasant's Eye *Narcissus* is a failure. It has been coaxed, but to no purpose. No silvery groups of flowers shine to the spring moonlight in my garden. C.

THE FLAME NASTURTIUM.

THIS flower of the sun—it seems to reflect in its fiery crimson blossoms the very sun's rays—has an enduring interest for many gardeners, a term we use in its broadest sense. Some very interesting notes have been sent to the writer on this quixotic *Tropæolum*, for the Flame *Nasturtium* is a *Tropæolum*—*T. speciosum*. Our correspondent is writing of the South of England, where the plant is infinitely more difficult to establish than in the Highlands of Scotland, where it covers many a cottage with flowers, much as the *Jasmine* or the *Solanum jasminoides* would do in sunny Devonshire and Cornwall. The first and most important point is the position the plant is to occupy. As our correspondent writes: "Our Southern Counties are too dry and scorching, unless special positions are chosen. Good places, not exposed to drying winds or to the direct rays of the sun, are often to be found on the north side of buildings, walls, or hedges. Unfortunately, the latter require clipping just when the *Tropæolum* is at its best, and for this reason a wall is to be preferred; the soil is moister and not so likely to be exhausted by hungry roots. It sometimes grows freely on the north side of Hollies and other evergreen shrubs, especially when the boughs extend for some distance close to the ground. In both heavy and light soils it is usually necessary to dig a hole about two feet deep, the larger the better, and to place at least twelve inches of garden refuse or decayed manure at the bottom. If trodden in firmly, the long white roots enjoy a cool moist run in summer."

PLANT THE FLAME NASTURTIUM NOW.

The time to plant is March or April, just before growth begins, and use for soil turfy loam, leaf-mould, or, better still, the remains of an old Cucumber-bed mixed together. Fill in the hole with this soil to within 4in. of the ground level, lay the roots 1ft. apart each way, and cover them 4in. deep with the soil. Good roots will soon produce two or three shoots each, and, as they are inconspicuous at first, it is well to place a few Birch twigs against them as a protection from disturbance. Watering is well repaid by the increased vigour of the plants. The Flame *Nasturtium* will not cling to the bare wall in the same way as Ivy, but it needs no tying. Its leaf-stalks always seem to be waiting for an opportunity to coil round any available support. The plant has a more natural appearance when clinging to boughs or netting, but the growths are apt to choke each other; this, however, may be remedied by constant attention to training. It must not be forgotten that this *Nasturtium* loves to send its roots through a hedge or shrub, and its trails of crimson flowers gain in beauty through this association of leaf and bloom.

TREATMENT OF WOUNDED TREES.

A correspondent writes for advice about wounded trees. This question was referred to some time ago, but it may be useful to give similar information



Miss M. Best.

BY THE RIVER-SIDE.

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again. When disease is noticed in old trees the supposition is that it is due to natural decay, but frequently the decayed places are the result of neglected wounds. The injuries may have been caused by the blowing out of a branch, biting or rubbing by cattle or insect pests. Often no attention is paid to these injured places until a large dead portion of bark or wood is discovered, or a large hole leading into the heart of the trees. Then it is considered time to take some steps to remedy the evil. The fault is in not attending promptly to the injury. If a branch is blown from a tree, neatly saw the stump off close to the trunk. When the margin has been pared round with a sharp knife give a good coating of tar as a protection from weather and fungoid pests. Patches of bark injured from any cause should be neatly pared back beyond the injured part and coated with tar. Where the wounds have been neglected and decay has set in remove the dead bark, and if the wood is badly decayed scrape it away to the place where it is firm. After this has been done paint the whole of the wounded portion with strong carbolic acid to kill any germs that may remain. Then give the whole a coating of tar. When the cavity is deep fill it with cement to the level of the bark after the tar has dried somewhat and give the cement a coat of tar when it has become dry. Clean out small holes as thoroughly as possible and disinfect, tar and plug up with cement, wood or some other hard material to the level of the bark. Holes filled in this way heal more rapidly than those left untouched. If a tree has been weakened through a decayed place, lighten the head, if it is at all heavy, otherwise irreparable injury may occur on a windy day. Trees that have been damaged may be improved by removing some of the soil from the surface of the ground within the radius of the branches, replacing it with fresh loam and well-rotted manure. Water liberally if the ground is dry, and dislodge water that may have accumulated in the forks of trees, as this prevents decay. Under these conditions place cement in the forks so that the water will run off. Trees that have dead tops may be given fresh life by removing the dead parts, patching up or disinfecting the decayed portions and judicious top-dressing.

TWO RENOVATED COTTAGES IN MONMOUTHSHIRE.

NO English county presents better old farm and cottage architecture than Gloucestershire. Its Cotswold villages are famous, and, in lesser degree, their excellence reaches to the western boundary of the county and makes the contrast all the greater when Wye and Severn are crossed. For the Welsh, as a people, have ever been meanly housed. The Principality possesses noble castles in ruins and some fine mansions standing, but the lesser dwellings have usually been uncompromising little cubes, with low-pitched blue slate roofs and inadequate apertures for light and entrance. Monmouthshire, unhappily, tends to the manner of its western rather than of its eastern neighbour, although, where pantiles were the roofing material, a better pitch of roof appears.

Such was the kind of cottages in a small parish near Chepstow, called Mownton. Before Free Trade days it had flourished, having little paper mills set along the stream that rushed down its narrow valley—a mere cleft in a limestone ridge. In recent times, however, it decayed; its population dropped to fifty, and its habitations, in many cases, lay ruinous or neglected. A cottage whose original meanness is heightened by the sordidness of neglect is an utterly unlovely thing. I owned a small farm in the parish, and the extreme



"WESTS" BEFORE RENOVATION.

picturesqueness of the limestone gorge led me to convert into a wild and water garden the end of the farm which lay within it, and which consisted of a steep hanging wood, studded with fine indigenous yew trees rising out of the rocky clefts, and of a diminutive flat meadow through which danced the clear stream. Here two of the most neglected cottages—close by, but under different ownership—constantly caught the eye and spoilt the picture. In time I got possession of them, and as they were among the nearest houses to the tiny church (the whole of this parish is in a nutshell; its extent is only 400 acres), and I wanted to maintain the idea of innabitanee and of a village, I thought it best not to destroy them, but to try and make them decently habitable within and of fair appearance without. As regards the latter, the general landscape composition of which they were to form part demanded the retention of the mellow look of age and a perfect simplicity of form. The accompanying sketches give a good idea of the appearance of



"JONESES": THE LIVING-ROOM.



"WESTS" AFTER RENOVATION.

the cottages both before and after treatment; but no reproduction can realise the full sense of sordidness conveyed by such tenements in the condition they were in—chimneys toppling, tiles off or awry, windows broken, woodwork decayed and a surrounding of scattered potsherds instead of trim gardens.

In the case of "Wests," which was to be for a gardener and to be brought within the general garden enclosure, I used the broken walls of the ruinous lean-to as the lower part of an extension, which gave a comfortable sitting-room off the kitchen below and an airy bedroom over, making their number up to three, all opening out of a passage. The two old ones were ceiled at the wall-plate, and I could barely stand up with my hat on, while the wretched little windows were much lower still. The staircase was a mere ladder and the bedrooms opened out of

each other. I put in a new and rather easier stair, made a passage, threw half the roof space into the height and raised the new windows right up to the roof-plate. But, of course, the new bedroom, which is of good size, has a fireplace and a large window high in the gable end, is much the best of the three. I obtained old pantiles for the new piece of roof, laying them over boards and felt, and hung the sides of the upper storey with elm weather-boards, than which no material tones more rapidly and pleasantly. The most amusing feature in the cottage is that, on the long side not shown in the picture, the outhouse wall had been built at a slight angle with the main wall. This I retained, and the elm weather-boards curve to it rather like the side of a ship. As I was known to want this cottage, I had to pay more than the market price for it. But for such a market price it

had been sold twenty years before, and had fetched £60, having a good-sized garden plot. The cost of reconstruction—for it pretty much amounted to that—was almost exactly £100. As to "Joneses," I had no need of it for use; I only wanted it to improve its outward look and tidy its garden. But as something had to be done to the inside, I arranged it as holiday quarters for any friend who likes summer picnicking amid beautiful surroundings such as this valley offers. I, therefore, added no rooms, and there are only two bedrooms. I removed the ruinous and leaky roof-windows, which were so low as merely to light your boots, and put new ones at a convenient level in the gable ends. This gave me an unbroken sweep of roof, which I brought down over the doorway as a porch and over the bay window, which I added to give sunshine and gaiety to the living-room. Then I reopened the wide old hearth and put in fire-dogs and a large, simple, local iron fire-back, dated 1659. The proximity of the Forest of Dean accounts for the abundance of such to be found until lately in the farmhouses. As furniture, I introduced a little old North Wales Livery cupboard and other such simple bits of oak, and the room is not without some humble character.



"JONESES" BEFORE RENOVATION.

Next to it is a small kitchen, lit from both sides and fitted with a Larbert "portable" range, and beyond that a back kitchen and a larder. I was only able to obtain this cottage on long lease, but the market value of its freehold would be much the same as in the other case, and I laid out some £75 on it. New cottages would have had higher ceilings and certain other hygienic advantages. But the cost of building anew with due regard to the outward aspect would have been large—and even these humble and ugly abodes seemed to me to have their own little local interest and parish history, which the alterations, I hope, have continued rather than destroyed. Moreover, they belonged to and were in full harmony with the scene, whereas new ones, however thoughtfully designed, would have had an appearance of size, importance and modernity which would have struck a false note amid the entirely old-world and out-of-the-way aspect of this remote and rather lost-looking speck of bygone English landscape. The sketches are by my friend and architect, Mr. G. H. Kitchen of Winchester. They are certainly excellent. As to the originals, I must say nothing except that he is absolved from all adverse criticism, for I did not venture to call in his professional advice for this small job. It occurred to me, however, that just now, when so many people are thinking of adapting or altering cottages, some account of my little experiment might be of service to them.

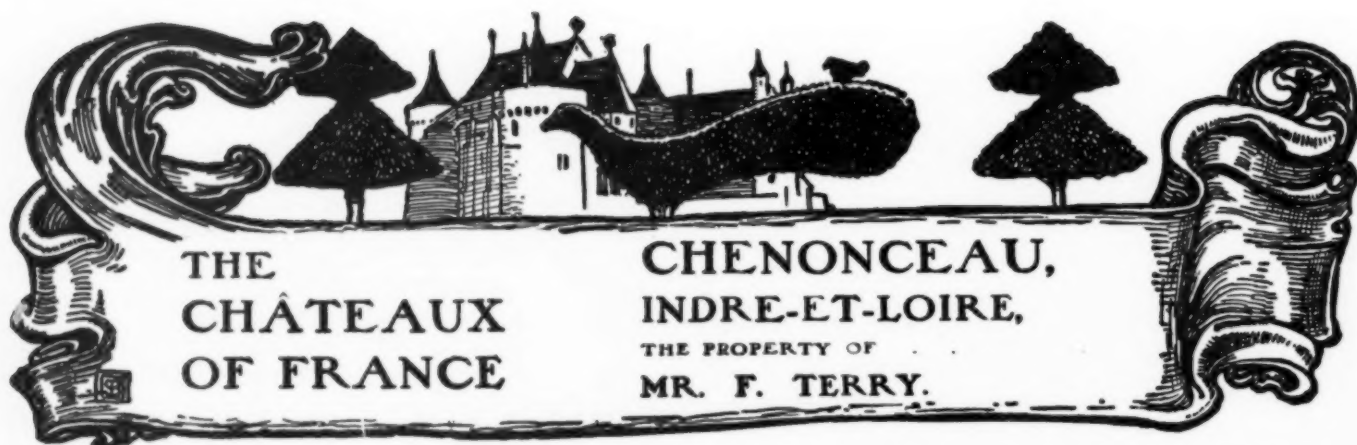
H. AVRAY TIPPING.



"JONESES" AFTER RENOVATION.



"JONESES": THE SOUTH END



CHENONCEAU and Anet, two of the most famous châteaux in France, are linked together by the history of Diane de Poitiers, and the tale of one is incomplete without its appropriate ending in the other. Chenonceau was the first in which the celebrated Royal favourite lived, and therefore I will begin with its especial story, and tell you of Anet in another paper; for Anet can well stand alone. It was built by Diane to be her "Dianet," and there is little left there but her memory. Chenonceau means much more than Diane, and as a typical framework of the characteristic romance of a great French country house, few places could be more worthily chosen to set in the forefront of any series of historic palaces. Its earliest donjon keep was fought for by Katharine Marques. The main pile at the entrance was built by Katharine Briçonnet. The wing across the Cher was set up by Katharine de Médici upon the arches built for the Duchesse Diane by Philibert de l'Orme. It passed on to the Duchesse de Mercœur and the Vendômes (whom we find at Anet also), and it went safely through the Revolution under Mme. Dupin, to become the property, in 1864, of Mme. Marguerite Pelouze. Mary Stuart, Queen Margot, Louise de Vaudemont, Gabrielle d'Estrées, Marie de Luxembourg, the lovely La Vallière, the artful Mancini—the list of its illustrious visitors is as long as it is fascinating; for Chenonceau is, above all things, a pleasure built for women by women, and its walls have never been stained with blood. It is also one more example, like Vaux le Vicomte and many another, of the beauties bequeathed to their country by the great financiers. Both Thomas Bohier and his wife, Katharine Briçonnet, were of that widespread family whose branches included Jacques de Beaune Semblançay, Florimond

Robertet (who built the Hotel d'Alluye at Blois), Pierre Legendre, Louis Poncher, Berthelot and other famous predecessors of the unhappy Fouquet. Their fate was, in almost every case, nearly as terrible as his; and if women saved Chenonceau from the pollution of bloodshed, the financiers gave it a heritage of lawsuits which began in the fifteenth century and lasted till the middle of the nineteenth. With women, or with law, or with finance the history of Chenonceau, at one time or another, is always inextricably connected, and it is usually somewhat overburdened with the complications of all three at once. The grace, the subtlety, the splendour of its varied architecture represent this triple strand that tints the web of all its fate.

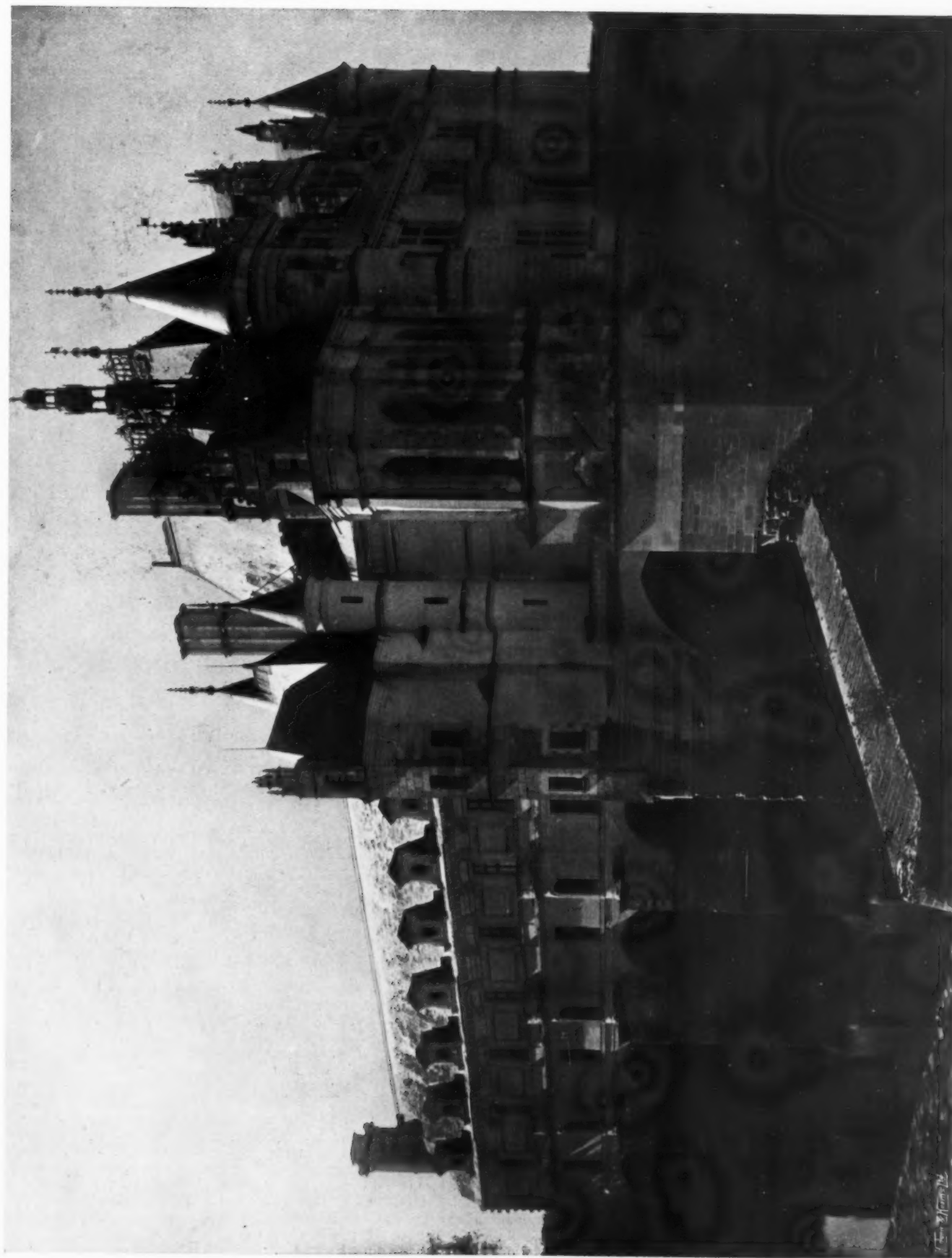
If the almost unparalleled wealth of its archives, as revealed by the industry of Monseigneur Chevalier, has produced more manuscript records of the history of Chenonceau than almost any other old country house in France can boast, the gardens and buildings on the estate are no less eloquent a testimony to the taste and lavish expenditure of its various owners. For Primaticcio arranged its fêtes and modelled their statuary; the park was laid out by Henry of Calabria and Collo of Messina; Bernard Palissy adorned the gardens; Cardin of Valence built the fountains. But, before all these had got to work, Bohier had given orders for the feudal fortress of the Marques to be turned into a true Renaissance château. All that is left of their first stronghold is the donjon tower (decorated and beautified), which stands before the main entrance in the courtyard, and the ancient masonry of their mill, built on the rocky bed of the river, which forms the foundations of Katharine Briçonnet's country house. For the perfecting of that house her husband,



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APPROACH FROM THE GROUNDS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



FROM THE MOAT: NORTH SIDE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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FORECOURT AND DONJON.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Thomas Bohier, trusted entirely to the great school of native art which flourished in Touraine in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The name of the actual architect is unknown; but it will be worth while recalling a few of the more famous of his comrades.

The old idea that Francis I. was the real father of the French Renaissance has been long ago exploded. He encouraged such Italians as Primaticcio or Il Rosso or Benvenuto Cellini; but how much he really cared about their value may be judged from the fact that he left Leonardo da Vinci to die alone and unheeded near Amboise, where the actual spot of his interment can no longer be authentically stated. The strong native school of true French art in Touraine he left almost entirely to its own devices, unless we are to count Chambord to his credit, a grotesque and Gargantuan creation which reflects more of the King's riotous and exaggerated humour than of the artist's ordered and restrained imagination. This native school took its rise in Jehan Fouquet, about 1440, who handed on the French traditions he had strengthened by Italian study to such men as Bordichon, Poyet and the Clouets. From oil-painting the art took a more architectural turn in the stained glass of Pinaigrier and Sarrazin; in the building of Bastien and Martin François, nephew of the great Michael Colombe; in the work of Pierre Valence of Tours, Jacques Coqueau of Amboise, who took on Trinqueau's work at Chambord; or Gratien François, who worked at the Royal château of Madrid. It was due to Frenchmen like these that such châteaux as Chenonceau, Ussé or Azay-le-Rideau were built before the best of Blois or Chambord had been begun; and it was to such French financiers as Bohier, Briçonnet, Beaune, or Berthelot that they owed their opportunities. Chenonceau, in its best parts, is wholly French; and though Italian influence becomes stronger in the gallery above the Cher, the work of Philibert de l'Orme is far more characteristic of the soil than the frigid formalities of the Italian gardens near it. A splendid avenue of elms and plane trees more than half a mile in length leads to the forecourt guarded by two sculptured Sphinxes, and here was the first line of defence of the old fortress of the Marques. It was surrounded by a moat and linked to the second courtyard by a drawbridge leading to the donjon tower, which still stands on the river's brink. Their defences were completed by the fortified mill built on the actual bed of the Cher, which was pulled down when Bohier used its foundations for his new Renaissance château.

The Marques originally came from Auvergne, and owned the Seignury of Chenonceau as far back as the beginning of the thirteenth century, together with a castle at Francueil, on the opposite side of the stream, which strengthened their position on its banks. This did not save them either from the forays of the Black Prince in 1355, or the ravages of the Free Companies of 1360; and it was in the reprisals undertaken against these latter that Bertrand du Guesclin had to take Chenonceau by storm during the campaign which freed Touraine from their depredations and attacks. More ill-fortune was to follow, for, in the reign of Charles VI., Jean Marques joined the Armagnac faction, and handed over his fortresses to the English troops, a mistake which was bitterly avenged by Marshal Boucicaut, who destroyed Chenonceau and cut down its forests.

In 1432 Charles VII. authorised the reconstruction of the castle by a Seigneur who had now given proofs of loyalty, and who could be of great use in consolidating a chain of defences then reduced to only Amboise, Loches and Chinon, outside the town of Tours itself. This, then, is the date of the feudal tower that stands, transformed, at Bohier's front door, its narrow slits for crossbowmen widened to let in the light, its sternly military outlines brightened by new fantasies of carving, its forbidding entrance gate changed to a welcoming portal. But the reconstructions of Jean Marques in 1432 began a financial ruin which his son Peter's carelessness completed; and Thomas Bohier watched the process with a satisfaction he was the better able to conceal because he was with Charles VIII. in Italy. His agent, Jacques de Beaune Semblançay, steadily and quietly bought up Francueil, and as much of the property as he could get, including the mortgages on Chenonceau itself. At last the screw was put on openly, and the unhappy owners had to agree to a forced sale. But Peter's brother, William, invoked a point of feudal law which considerably delayed matters, and William's daughter fought the case so well that she entered into possession of the family domain at a rent payable to Bohier in lieu of the full capital outlay she could not yet return to him. She married François Fumée, a son of Louis XI.'s Court Physician, who supported her as strongly as he could; but, being unable to pay either principal or interest, they tried to sell the property to Aymar de Prie, whereon Bohier insisted on a forced sale, as he had every right to do, and bought the place for 15,641 livres, equivalent to about £12,500 of our currency.

It is curious that when the Marques disappeared from Touraine, another Auvergnat family should have taken their place; for Thomas Bohier was the son of a burgess of Issoire, husband of the aunt of Chancellor Du Prat. As I have said, he married Katharine, daughter of Guillaume Briçonnet of Tours, whose wife was Raoulette, the sister of Jacques de Beaune Semblançay. The excellent Guillaume died a Cardinal-Archbishop of Narbonne, with the added bishoprics of St. Malo, Nîmes and Rheims. Thomas Bohier, who began as Legal Secretary to Charles VIII., was made Financial Controller of Normandy in 1496. Only three other men were equally highly placed in the reigns of Louis XII. and Francis I., and their powers of enforcing payment and of authorising the expenditure of public money amounted to little short of sovereignty within their sphere of action. Seventeen years after his appointment Bohier owned Chenonceau, and within another twelve months

the estate was raised to a "châtellenie" by letters patent of Louis XII. at Blois; and its ennobled owner did homage to the new King, Francis I., at Rheims in 1515. The records of his continuous purchases of lands all round the castle show the curious fact that the ground was then divided up among some 622 small holders, who possessed an average of three acres each. It was to Katharine Briçonnet that the supreme task of building her lord and master's home was allotted during his absence on the Italian campaigns, and no doubt it is the impress of her character upon the whole of the original design which so commended the place to the noble and royal ladies who succeeded her. She fully realised the possibilities of such a position as that held by her husband, sovereign over local taxation, exempt himself from every requisition, strong in the immediate support and countenance of the King, and answerable to no one else save to officials who were his own relations. She recognised,



too, that a responsibility attached to such possibilities, the responsibility of spending nobly upon splendid aims the money which had come to her through channels that cannot be said to have been invariably above suspicion. Such builders as Katharine and her husband not only developed and directed that artistic movement known as the Renaissance; they are themselves its best explanation. For they represent the successful emergence from the *bourgeoisie* of the commercial class first given its opportunity by Louis XI.; they characteristically endeavoured to make the first use of their new-found wealth and position by scattering over France artistic residences, filled with the treasures of Italy, designed by the best of the French artists, as a deliberate challenge and contrast to the dusty ruins in which their rivals, the old feudal nobility, dwelt apart in pride of birth. The opening of the donjon walls to the wide windows of the sixteenth century has a significance that is much more than architectural. The bulk of Katharine Bohier's architecture was finished by 1517; her chapel was dedicated by her brother-in-law Antoine, Cardinal-Archbishop of Bourges, in the next year, and its interior details were completed not later than 1521, ten years before Primaticcio or il Rosso was in France. The main mass of the masonry rests upon the two huge piles on each side of the arch in which the mill-wheel used to be turned by the water of the Cher. The lightness and beauty of the design are chiefly effected by the graceful treatment of the corner turrets, the chimneys and the dormer windows. Perhaps the finest view is

obtainable from the south-west angle of the Duchess Diana's Italian garden, whence you see the eastern façade reproduced in the famous scenery at the Paris Opera in the second act of "The Huguenots," and you may realise how entirely this plan differs from the old arrangement of building upon three sides of a square, the front of which is occupied by the entrance and donjon keep. At Chenonceau the necessities of military defence are wholly abandoned, the battlements have become a sculptured frieze, the apartments are planned wholly with a view to pleasure, and on lines without a precedent in domestic architecture.

The central vestibule opens out to right and left into four saloons, to which must be added, on the east, the chapel and the library, built on the two pointed masses of masonry which were originally designed to break the force of the current in the old days of the mill. The chapel was connected with the library by an open loggia built over the river and protected from the weather by a roof. The staircase, abandoning the spiral formation of the older styles, is designed after the Italian plan of parallel steps and rectilinear landings, and provides, with Azay le Rideau, one of the best and earliest examples of this arrangement in France. Among the carvings of its doorway is the salamander of Francis I. In the dining-room the effigies of St. Thomas and St. Catherine, sculptured on the door, recall its earliest owners, whose motto is also recorded as "S'IL VIENT A POINT ME SOUVIENDRA," together with their arms, the blue lion for Bohier in the chapel, and the golden star of the Briçonnet.

The interlaced initials on some of the ceilings may be diversely interpreted as the H and C of Henri II. and "Catherine" de Médici, or the H and D of the King and his beloved Diane. It was the former lady, no doubt, who brought from Italy the medallions and busts of Roman emperors to decorate the vestibule of the first floor, and it was certainly the Italian Queen of Henri II. who built upon the bridge which Diane de Poitiers had ordered from Philibert de l'Orme, a "gallery" in which the same French architect displays a very notable instance of the ingenuity with which he could adapt Italian principles to local exigencies. But I think the wing that joins Chenonceau to the other bank is not in any way so interesting or beautiful as the house which Bohier built upon the old piles of the Marques mill; and it is only when this part is in the forefront of the view, and the bridge takes a subordinate position, that the place, to my mind, looks its best.

I must linger no longer on the architecture of a house where there is far more history than can be even suggested within reasonable limits. In 1521, the very year when the last details were added to the interior of the chapel, Thomas Bohier, who had seen very little of the home on which his heart was set, left it again for Italy, and left it for the last time. Again the parallel to the tragic story of Fouquet and his Vaux le Vicomte is curiously exact. Bohier, to his sorrow, was Paymaster-General of the Forces in this campaign, and whenever the Swiss mercenaries were hard up they presented the crude ultimatum, "Pay up or we join the enemy." Francis I. had ordered 400,000 crowns for immediate expenses, which the rapacious and unscrupulous Louise de Savoie stole for her own use, securing the shameful condemnation of Jacques de Beaune Semblançay, later on,



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DOOR TO SALLE À MANGER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

for a malversation of which he was entirely innocent. Lautrec, at the front, would have been cruelly embarrassed had not Bohier and his friends come to his rescue with funds out of their own pockets. When the Constable de Bourbon was added to the ranks of their enemies, the French had to retire; and it was on the retreat of 1524, which cost the chivalry of Europe the life of Bayard, that Bohier died at Vigelli on March 24th. He was buried in the town of Tours, of which he had been elected Mayor twenty-seven years before, and two years later the body of his wife Katharine was laid beside him. Their children were Antoine, the heir, Governor of Touraine; François, who inherited the bishopric of St. Malo from his maternal uncle; Guillaume, Bailly of the Cotentin; and Gilles, Bishop of Agde and Dean of Tarascon. The disgraceful treatment meted out to Semblançay, who died unjustly on the gibbet of Montfaucon at the age of eighty-two, must have suggested to the orphan Bohiers a little of what they might expect. But the universal public condemnation of this cruelty only enraged both Louise de Savoie and her son still more. Seven years after his father's death Antoine's estate was declared £160,000 (of our money) in debt to the Treasury. Fortunately Louise de Savoie died soon after this iniquitous announcement had been made, and Antoine Bohier offered money and securities to the amount of £125,000 to Francis I., among which Chenonceau itself appeared as the chief item, at an estimated value of £75,000. The King accepted this arrangement in 1535, forgave the balance of the alleged debt, and pledged his Royal word, and that of his successors, to uphold the contract for ever, putting Philibert Babou, the Royal Treasurer at Tours, into immediate possession. One Royal visit is known to have resulted, and it was pregnant with consequences. In 1538 the King came to Chenonceau with his wife, Eleanor of Austria, and his mistress, the Duchesse d'Etampes. In his company was the Dauphin, strictly following the Royal example, with his wife, Katharine de Médiçi, and his mistress, Diane de Poitiers—a curious sidelight on the manners and customs of the time. The castle was scarcely furnished, and was little more than a hunting seat, but its charms made a deep impression upon at least two ladies in the Royal party. One of them had not long to wait before the place she coveted belonged to her. Francis I. died in March, 1547. In that July Henri II. had given Chenonceau to Diane de Poitiers. I shall not linger too long in this place upon this remarkable lady's character and career, for Anet is a more appropriate setting to them both. But the very typical proceedings by which she fastened her grip upon Chenonceau may at least be sketched, for they give you an insight into her methods that is worth pages of unsupported criticism.

Diane, when her lover reached the throne, was forty-eight, and had been sixteen years a widow, with a title taken from that same Duchy of Valentinois which had been one of the empty honours bestowed on Cæsar Borgia. Among the many gifts she immediately absorbed, Anet was the one least likely to be lost, for it was a family inheritance that had been "in sequestration." Out of the rest she made money as rapidly as possible. Chenonceau needed careful handling to be made secure. By a clause specially inserted in the Royal deed of gift, the estate, bestowed "in reward for the patriotic services of



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THE ENTRANCE DOORWAY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

her late husband," was declared never before to have been legally incorporated in the Royal domain, and its new owner is given every right to enforce against the Bohier estates any shortcomings discovered in the valuation of 1535. Diane proceeded to make sure of her prey. The unhappy Antoine was summoned, in 1550, to defend himself against a charge of fraudulent valuation in the transactions of fifteen years ago, and found to his surprise that the late Sovereign's plighted word (as already set forth) was to be entirely disregarded by the Privy Council, to whom the case was sent. He forthwith hurried off for change of air to Venice. Though a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, a Privy Councillor, a Governor of Touraine and a Financier-General, he knew when to give way to a lady, and he preferred to carry on negotiations at a distance. He remembered his two uncles, Jacques de Beaune Semblançay and Jean Poncher, both hanged high and dry upon the gibbet of Montfaucon; and he decided to study architecture and commerce by the waters of the Lido. His name was shouted through the streets of Lyons as if he had been a strayed horse. But he stayed snug in Venice for two years, leaving a power of attorney with his wife, who was always well treated at the French Court, in case he might come back to her. Can you wonder at the grim satire of the "Chats Fourrés" in so many bitter chapters of Rabelais? At last the Council decided, in 1554, that the transactions of 1535 were annulled, save and except the cash balance of the debt specifically forgiven by Francis I. This, of course, left the fate of Chenonceau itself still open, and made it

evident also to all good lawyers that the estate had never formed a legal portion of the late King's Royal property. It belonged, in fact, as you may plainly see, to the recalcitrant Antoine, who scandalously remained in Venice instead of paying his just debts to the Crown. The title deeds were hurriedly despatched to him, and as the cash was not immediately forthcoming from him for the Royal Treasury, the debtor's estate of Chenonceau was forthwith put up to public auction, in all due legal form, to satisfy the Royal claim. In January, 1555, the Duchesse Diane, who had been quietly improving her property, "let it be known" that she would bid. Singularly enough, there was no advance made, and the place was duly adjudged to her as the highest bidder in June, 1555. In exchange for the title deeds Bohier was generously pardoned any further outstanding differences apparent in the letters patent issued in November, 1556, and this terminated about as disgraceful a proceeding as ever any lady blackened her pretty fingers withal. I cannot resist a satisfaction—which I know the reader will share—in the thought that, in spite of everything, Katharine de Médici seized Chenonceau the moment her husband died, only to die bankrupt herself, and that the tedious chicanery of the Duchesse de Valentinois, which had benefited neither herself nor her even more repulsive rival, eventually provided Mme. Dupin with sufficient evidence to save Chenonceau from destruction as a Royal domain during the horrors that followed the Revolution. This is why the château is one of the few great houses of France which were not wrecked at the end of the eighteenth century. So Antoine Bohier's

misfortunes served a good end after all. The home his father loved so much was, by the very jealousy and strife its beauties raised, preserved from the mutilation and decay that ruined many a palace of more princely origin. It need scarcely be said that Diane had been far from idle while the lawyers worked. If lengthy legal proceedings seemed necessary for her eventual safety, there was nothing to prevent her immediate enjoyment of the King's gift, and within a few months of Henri II.'s accession her workmen were installed at Chenonceau. Her first care was for the gardens, which she laid out after the Italian style introduced by Charles VIII.'s favourite "Horticulturist," Messire Passelo da Mercogliano; and the terraced space on the right bank of the Cher to the eastward of the château was the result of 14,000 working days from the spring of 1551. Nicquet of Tours planted in it the trees offered by loyal inhabitants from all the country round. Cardin de Valence carved its fountains, Philibert de l'Orme designed the bridge which Pierre Hurlu and Jean Philippon built in 1556 and Jean Norays finished. The King paid for all, and every penny of the accounts is still in the archives of the château. There is not a single item among them of charity to the poor. In 1559 the King was dead, and Katharine de Médici turned out the favourite within four months. She did it cleverly enough, masking her private vengeance by urging Parliament to supply an empty Treasury by annulling the Royal bounties of the last two Kings and devoting the proceeds to the public weal. "Put not your trust in Princes" might be written on the walls of Chenonceau. Diane read the omens and recognised her enemy. Chaumont was offered her in consolation; but she died at Anet seven years later.

Chenonceau to-day is very much as Katharine de Médici left it, and with her completion in 1576 (from Philibert de l'Orme's designs) of the wing upon Diana's bridge across the Cher, the place received the final expression of its many builders' personalities. They were all women, and, curiously enough, Chenonceau never flourished, in its elder days, when a man was its sole master. Perhaps its most brilliant period was that inaugurated by the Queen whose memory and character are so repellent to me that I can never hope to treat her with the judicial fairness of an unbiassed historian. So I will say as little of her here as possible; of the marvellous fêtes she made for François II. and Marie Stuart; of her frail and fascinating *escadron volant*; of the foul brood of her children—the mad Charles IX., the vicious and effeminate Henri III.; of her squalid death at Blois, beneath the rooms that dripped with the blood of murdered Guise; of the bankruptcy that set her desperate creditors battering at the gates of Chenonceau, where quiet Queen Louise, "la Reine Blanche," waited and prayed for her release.

By the desire of Henri IV. a marriage was arranged between Louise's niece, Françoise de Lorraine, daughter of her brother the Duc de Mercœur, and César de Vendôme, son of the Vert Galant and Gabrielle d'Estrées, and to this new César passed the home of Katharine Briçonnet in 1601. He cared little enough either for its beauty or its associations; and the projected marriage only came off eight years afterwards. His mother, the Duchesse de Mercœur, lived there in his stead, and filled the garrets in the roof with monks, who stayed there till she died at Anet in 1623. For many a long year afterwards Chenonceau was utterly neglected, recovering, as it were, from the shock of the long proceedings resulting from the bankruptcy of Katharine de Médici—proceedings which had followed with such sinister persistence upon the lawsuits of Diane and the entanglements of Bohier. Even in their absence, the Vendômes brought on the place its inevitable fate again. Their extravagance produced the brokers, and many of Queen Katharine's most cherished Italian works of art had to be sold at auction. It was a depleted Chenonceau that Anne de Bourbon-Condé, Duchess of Vendôme, left to her mother, the Princess of Condé, in 1718; and it was only when the Duc de Bourbon sold it to Claude Dupin, in 1733, that some measure of its old prosperity returned. Now Claude Dupin was just such another Financier-General as its builder, Bohier. The whirligig of Time was at last working compensation.

Again it is a woman who is the chief connection between Chenonceau and the family who held it in the middle of the eighteenth century; for it was in Mme. Dupin's salons that the social and literary celebrities of France met Fontenelle, Bernis, Buffon, Voltaire, the Princess de Rohan, Lady Hervey and Mme. de Mèrepoix; and in 1742 Jean Jacques Rousseau became her secretary. He had before then been tutor to her sons, the younger of whom married Marie-Aurore, natural daughter of Marshal Saxe, and had a son, Maurice Dupin, who was the father of Georges Sand. Such freaks of genealogy have always interested me, and in this case they form a curious link between Chambord and Chenonceau, though they are not as strange as the blood relations of the family of Diane de Poitiers, which I shall mention elsewhere. Mme. Dupin herself, the patron of Jean Jacques, was a natural daughter of Samuel Bernard the banker and an actress, who was in turn the fruit of a temporary



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DETAIL OVER DOORWAY.

"C.L."

union between Dancourt, the playwright, and Thérèse Le Noir La Thorillière, a celebrated beauty of the footlights. The best tribute to Mme. Dupin's qualities, both of heart and head, is that in 1789 Chenonceau was untouched amid the universal wreckage, and that in 1790 she held good, even against the Revolutionary lawyers, the claim established by Diane de Poitiers 240 years before, that Chenonceau had never been a Royal castle. It was inherited in 1799 by her great-nephew, the Comte de Villeneuve, who married his cousin Adelaide, daughter of the Comte de Guibert, who had died in 1790 after various gallant passages with Mlle. de Lespinasse. This soldier's "Essay on Tactics" attracted the attention of Napoleon to his son, and it was the Châtelain of Chenonceau who had the honour of announcing the birth of Prince Louis, the future Napoleon III.

The heirs of this Comte de Villeneuve sold the castle to another distinguished lady, Margaret, daughter of Daniel Wilson, the canny Scot from Glasgow who made a fortune by lighting Paris with gas, and whose son became Deputy for the Indre et Loire and Under-Secretary of State to the Treasury. Margaret married Eugène-Philippe Pelouze, chairman of the great Parisian Gas Company, and son of the illustrious chemist. By Mme. Pelouze was ordered the little restoration that was necessary (at the hands of Félix Roguet, architect, of Dijon) to bring back to Chenonceau something of the splendour it had known in the early days of Katharine de Médici, and by their enlightened care the open loggia over the river between the chapel and the library, which the Italian Queen had built over, was once more opened up as Katharine Bohier had designed it. The staircase from the first floor to the second was also rebuilt in 1870, exactly on the model of the lower one; and the various theatrical additions, introduced by



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DETAILS OF FRONT DOOR.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Mme. Dupin for Rousseau's atrabilious comedies, were cleared away to give space for the magnificent chimney-pieces on the first floor that record the victories of Francis I. and the memory of Katharine de Médici. The Italian gardens of Diane de Poitiers were also restored to their old ordered splendour; and though when I first saw the place it was temporarily in the hands of the Crédit Foncier, that momentary embarrassment (without which no period of the history of Chenonceau seems complete) soon passed away, and one of the loveliest châteaux of Touraine now once more enjoys the advantages bestowed by the grace of habitation and the benefits of a wealth that has no connection with its previous records.

THEODORE ANDREA COOK.

A SEVERN SALMON-TRAP.

AFTER a good woman, and a good book, and tobacco," says Stevenson, "there is nothing so agreeable on earth as a river"; and his sentiment has found its echo in the hearts of many born upon the banks of stately river or of dancing brook. To the Severn and the Wye, two of the largest and most beautiful of English streams, there is attached an interest, certainly unusual, perhaps unique, by the strange chances of their course. Rising barely two miles apart upon the slopes of Plinlimmon, their sources are within twelve miles of Cardigan Bay; yet the contours of the hill send both the streams inland—the Severn to flow upon a circling journey of 200 miles and more before it reaches the salt water of the Bristol Channel, the Wye to take a south-eastern course and join her greater sister after travelling 150 miles. From their respective sources to the meeting-place is, as the crow flies, little more than half the length of the shorter stream. Below Gloucester the Severn broadens out and flows to meet the sea through a mud-bound, winding channel, the high-lying district of Dean Forest on the right or northern bank, the fertile grazing meadows of the Vale of Berkeley on the left. An orthodox course enough; first the clear and sparkling waters of the hillside stream, next the broad full river of maturity and last of all the spreading mud-flats of the estuary. But the Wye, the "little sister," is a "freak." After a long course through the placid fields and broad valleys of Herefordshire, she strikes once more among the hills and flows for forty miles between high wooded cliffs on either side, only emerging from them when, at Chepstow Castle, she is but three miles from the journey's end. Sauntering in the narrow valley by the river's side, or climbing the steep woodland paths above the stream, with Tintern Abbey lying like some grey jewel

far below, one can appreciate the minute accuracy of Tennyson's lines:

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

True, there is poetic licence in the "half," for only some twelve miles of the river are tidal water. But it is here crossed at frequent intervals by ancient weirs, over which, at low tide, it rushes with a babble heard far up the hills; the complete silence at high tide is a contrast very marked to one familiar with the stream. Three hundred yards from Beachley Point—the spur of land which parts the meeting streams—a rocky island rises from the muddy tide. Probably it was no island centuries ago, for a comparison of the slope of its strata with those of the mainland seems to point to its having been separated by some set of the currents, here violent and conflicting. Nor is it indeed an island now at lowest ebb, for during an hour of slack water a path can be found to it across the slippery mud and seaweed covered rocks. Treacle Island is the local name, but not every visitor is sufficiently versed in hagiology to trace at once this evident corruption to its source—St. Tecla, or Teraclius, the question of the hermit's sex being still obscure. That such recluse once lived upon the island there is little doubt; massive foundations and broken but substantial walls still testify of chapel and of cell.

Across the Severn, here a mile from shore to shore, but with the channel available for shipping both narrow and intricate, a line of sandstone cliffs rises from the beach, their glow at sunset visible from far. A quarter of a mile back along our point of land there is a sloping landing-stage, or "slip" of stone, an inn

and a small, disused custom-house. This is the Old Passage, "grandfather," if we may put it so, of the famous Severn Tunnel a few miles lower down. The predecessor of the tunnel was a ferry steamer plying across the river from New Passage, which itself superseded the Old Passage, at one side of which we stand. The London passengers for South Wales, set down from the coach upon the further side, took boat to find another coach in waiting here. Here, too, we are upon a battle-field. This tongue of level land between the Severn and the Wye, two miles or more in length before it rises gently towards Dean Forest and its outlying "Chase," was an important place in Charles's Civil War. Rupert held Bristol for the King, and the Marquess of Worcester still kept the Royal standard floating from the keep of Raglan Castle. Beachley, which commanded the passage of the Severn towards Bristol, and the channel of the Wye which led towards Raglan, Herefordshire and Wales, was entrenched by the Royalists, while the King's ships cruised or anchored in both streams; but the guns of the vessels could be of service only at high tide. At ebb the Severn is a mere thread of channel among wastes of mud and sand, while the average fall of the Wye at Chepstow is 25ft., and sometimes 46ft. The wily Roundheads stormed the place, choosing an hour when the tide was out: the ships, lying far below the level of the land, were powerless to render aid. Just where a park, well studded with fine timber and bordered by a line of evergreen oaks, joins the cultivated land, the entrenching ditch and wall of earth may still be seen. The house within the park, perched high upon the cliffs, and looking west across this "waters' meet," has interest of its own. For in it Eleanor Ormerod was born, the entomologist and farmer's friend. Chatting among the salmon-fishers of the place, it is not difficult to find some veteran who, as a boy, earned from her a frequent shilling in exchange for some strange grub or moth picked up beside the plough or on the meadow path.

And not a stone's throw from the southern river border of the park is placed the salmon-trap, which gives a title to this article. Though one of the largest, it is not the only one upon this Western stream; others stand at intervals on either side. But on no other river is the method of the "putcher" known. It is, as usual, vain to seek a local explanation of the name. "Potcher" is a term sometimes applied to a small salmon; beyond that all is dark. But to the trap itself. Viewed, out of

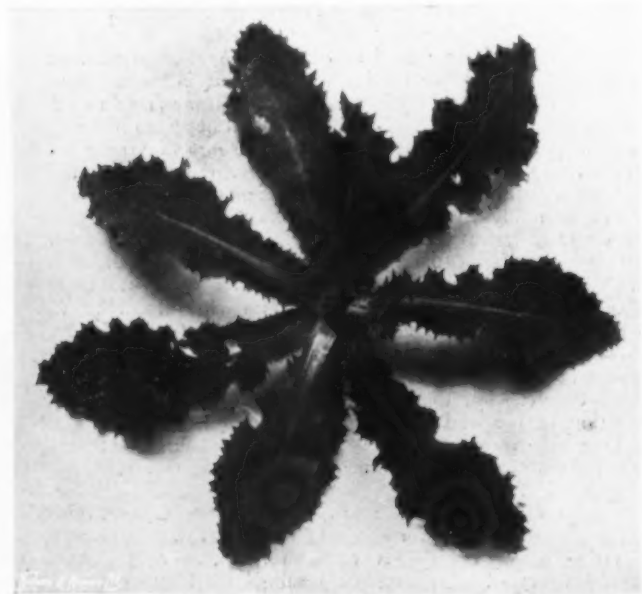
the season, between August and May 1st, there is only to be seen an erection of stakes and crossbars, rising some 8ft. from the low-tide mud, 6ft. in width, and jutting at right angles from the beach for 70yds. or 80yds. The cross-pieces are laid in horizontal tiers, some four or five, so that the whole structure bears no little likeness to a giant rack for storing wine. The bottles, if the simile may be continued, are behind us, piled in a small enclosure on the grassy "saltings" of the river bank. Very much the shape of an enlarged hock bottle they are, 5ft. or more in length, and formed of ash or hazel sticks bound round at intervals with supple withes. At the larger and open end they are some 20in. broad, narrowing gradually till the sticks which form the sides are gathered to a point and firmly tied.

May Day is the opening of the "putcher" season, and it dawns upon a busy scene. Boat after boat is loaded from the shore and moored along the line of stakes, till some 600 of the wicker traps are laid in place. The open ends are turned up-stream, for it is with the ebb tide that fish are caught, and owing to various causes—the inward curve of the coast at this point, and the presence of certain banks of mud and rock—there is nearly always something of an ebb just where the "putcher" stands. There are drawbacks to its use. The struggles of the salmon, which on realising that they are in the trap wedge themselves more tightly in their efforts to escape, play sad havoc with the shining scales; nor is the flesh of fish thus drowned by the swift outrush of the ebbing tide so crisp and firm as that which is taken fresh and lively from the net or line. But the advantages of the "putcher" are obvious. After the first erection of a line of stakes, and the accumulation of a stock of traps, the expense is very small. It needs the very roughest gales and tides, or the rare descent of ice after a long winter's frost, to do much damage to the stakes; the traps themselves are cheaply made, and suffer little wear and tear. The needful labour, when once the "putcher" is in working order, is but small. A salt-looking and ancient man comes, when the ebb begins, to sit, with pipe in mouth, upon the beach, and watch tier after tier of traps appear in view above the muddy swirl. Presently he sights the struggles of a silver fish and, when the mud in which the stakes are set lies shining in the sun, wades slowly in his long sea-boots to reap this harvest of the tide.

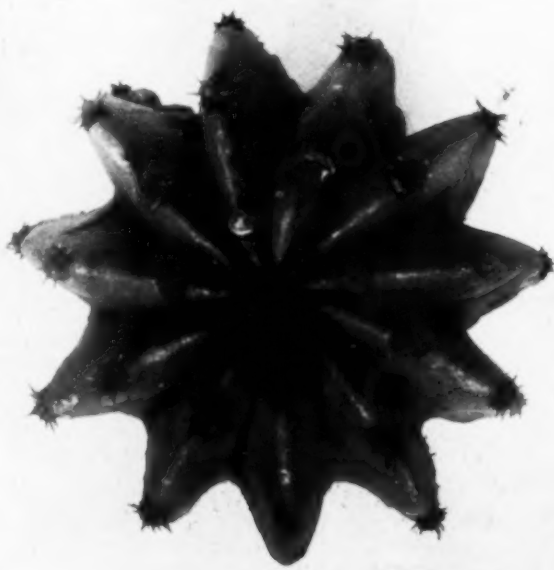
ARTHUR O. COOKE.

THE PLANT AS A PATTERN-MAKER.

AT first sight there appears to be little that is exact about the evidences of life upon this earth. The forms in which the different organisms are presented seem to be capable of so much modification, that there is small hint of underlying control. This elasticity of principle, although a very necessary characteristic in a world where conditions vary so enormously, is far more apparent than real. To enquire into the development of a plant is to bring to light a story of ordered growth, and to disclose a system of rules which might well have been formulated for the guidance of a designer. The very arrangement of the foliage on the tree, to all appearance a matter of haphazard adjustment, is actually devised on lines which are plotted with a mathematical precision. It is possible



SOW-THISTLE.



COG-WHEEL DESIGN OF MAMMILLARIA.

to indicate these rules, and to classify each plant according to the Nature of its growth. A simple and typical example may be found in the case of the alder, in common with a number of our deciduous trees. An examination of a well-developed stem will reveal the fact that the leaves are arranged in spiral fashion, from the base of each stalk to the axil of the one above it carried exactly halfway round. It would thus be possible to reduce any plant to a specific plan of development, although the different kinds might vary greatly in the degree of complication, according to the particular habit of growth of the species.

Nature and art, widely as they seem to be separated in the accepted senses of the terms, are not so far apart in actuality. The differences are possibly more matters of degree than anything



HOLLY FERN.



SPURGE.

else. With Sir Thomas Browne, we may perhaps consider that "Art is the perfection of Nature." There is little doubt that Nature is a true artist in the sense of the word, as it applies to one who works by a code of rules. But in all the many occurrences which are likely in a complex world, a certain modification on occasion appears to be essential. As we see any organism at the present time, we witness the product of the great force of natural selection, operating over countless ages. One alteration has followed another, until the final result bears but little resemblance to the original type. All these complications, doubtless very necessary in themselves, have to a great extent destroyed the simplicity of the early design. If the issue lies between the well-being of a plant and the mere adherence to a habit of growth, the choice is unhesitatingly made in favour of an alteration in the lines of development. The intricate floral forms shown by the orchids have doubtless been rendered necessary by the dependence of the plants upon the agency of special insects for their fertilisation. The fantastic shapes of these blossoms contrast strangely with the comparatively simple designs to be seen in the case of the daisy, for instance. In the general growth of plants there is much to indicate that Nature, given a free hand, is distinctly in favour of a well-

balanced design. There are few species which, if quite unhampered, will not develop with a fine precision, indicating the definite rules controlling their habits. But there are many circumstances affecting the individual plant which cause it to depart from its normal scheme. The jostling of its neighbours, entailing a difficulty in getting a sufficiency of light and air, an awkward position, or a shortage of moisture, each and any of these may render a departure from the ordinary manner of growth a necessity.

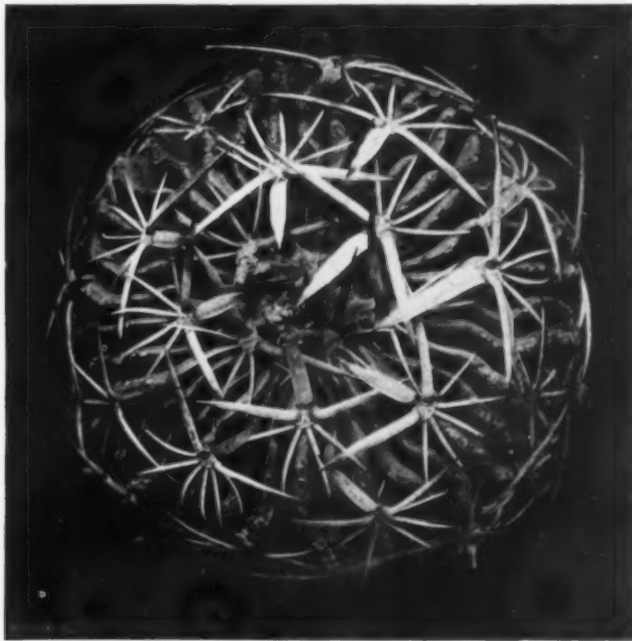
Seeing that the arrangement of the foliage upon the plant is a matter of such nice adjustment, it is not surprising to find that patterns of considerable artistic merit are to be observed very commonly. Of course, these are only to be noticed when Nature has a free hand, and has not to take into account any utilitarian considerations. The patterns are not always very obvious; but a good impression of the design formed by the leaves of almost any well-developed shoot may be obtained from an overhead position. The pretty rosettes made by many wayside weeds must have often fascinated those with an eye for this special study. Given a clear way all round, dandelions, daisies and sow-thistles, to mention only three out of many, will dispose themselves in the most attractive forms. It is a curious



ECHINOCACTUS.



DANDELION.



A CACTUS PATTERN.

reflection that, in these simple examples, Nature seems to have reached perfection. In the retention of a generally balanced effect, she has as well served the best interests of the plants from a practical standpoint. It will be appreciated that, in these short-stemmed plants, it is only by the very perfect arrangement of the leaves that the proper illumination of the foliage could be secured. It has, moreover, been pointed out recently, that by this peculiar manner of development, these plants discourage the growth of other specimens in their immediate vicinity, which might cause inconvenience. In passing, it is an interesting fact to notice that broad leaves are almost always held in a horizontal position, while the species with narrower leaves develop their foliage in a more or less erect attitude.

It is rather a singular fact that rigidity of design is more widely evident among succulents than in any other group of plants. This is largely due to the curious conditions under which these remarkable species live—a state of affairs making it of the first importance that the area of the plant should be reduced as much as possible. Thus in the case of most cacti it is seen that foliage, from which the evaporation of moisture takes place so freely in other plants, has been dispensed with altogether. In other succulent species it has been considerably modified. This change has very much simplified the general manner of growth, and as a consequence it is found that Nature is to be seen almost at her best as a pattern-maker among the succulents. In their comparatively elemental shapes, the cacti are influenced to a much less degree by their surroundings than the more elaborate plants. It is a well-known fact that the different species of these desert inhabitants are wonderfully constant to their particular designs, proving that they are but little affected by the varying conditions which influence so strongly the more complicated vegetation. Perhaps even more interesting are the succulent euphorbias, members of a family which embraces an

immense range of form and habit among its members. As is well known, the African desert species have taken upon themselves a wonderful external resemblance to the cacti. Again, with the simplification of form we see the same reversion to the more balanced type of plant growth, offering yet another proof of the real tendencies of Nature in this direction. A similar case is evidenced to a lesser degree in the beautiful rosettes of the house-leek, and in many other of the sempervivums. Quite often a

regularity of design in the case of a plant seems to be reflected in the formation of the floral appendages. A very striking instance is that of the African *Stapelia asterias*, a plant of very exact growth, producing star-shaped flowers which are marvels of precision, in their outline resembling a geometrical figure more than anything else.

Mankind has not been slow to recognise in the work of Nature that which is truly artistic. Any number of our most familiar emblems must have had their origin in a plant, or at any rate some part of it. The poet Wordsworth, in the second of his dainty little poems to the lesser *Celandine*, tells us:

I have not a doubt but he,
Whose'er the man might be,
Who the first with pointed rays
(Workman worthy to be sainted)
Set the signboard in a blaze,
When the risen sun be painted,
Took the fancy from a glance
At thy glittering countenance.

Anyone who has seen these golden flowers shining in the spring sunshine will agree that it would not be easy to find a more suitable design to represent the solar orb in all the majesty of his rising. In like manner, despite the critics who decry the assertion, the emblem of fleur-de-lys can be none other than a representation of the graceful lines of the iris. That it is to the national flower of England to which we owe the attractively neat rosette, of course goes without saying—the very name of the badge is a sufficient indication of the origin of the pattern.

S. LEONARD BASTIN.



ROSETTE OF HOUSE-LEEK.

A FAMOUS STEEPLCHASING STABLE.

TO few men is it given to enjoy that measure of esteem and affection which is accorded to Mr. J. J. Maher by those who can lay claim to his friendship. Sprung from a good old Irish sporting stock, the love of horses was part and parcel of his inheritance. Dumb

animals have given him their confidence unasked for, and in their wake the lords of creation may be well content to follow. Some portion of Mr. Maher's youthful days was passed in the seclusion of a Benedictine monastery, from the peaceful shelter of the walls of which he emerged into the more or less rough-and-ready life involved in the assisting of his father in the management of his property, especially that portion of it represented by farms in hand. As might have been expected, well-bred colts and fillies were part and parcel of the stock to be found on such farms as these; nor was it long before the subject of these notes found an opportunity of showing that towards the breaking and riding of them his natural inclinations were bent. Soon it became generally known that "young Maher" was a horseman of the first order, gifted with fine hands, strong in the saddle and completely unable to grasp the meaning of the word "funk." Count Zborowski,

who, in spite of his foreign-sounding adopted name, was in fact an Englishman both by name and instincts, was not slow to notice his quiet and confident style of riding, and, debarred himself from much riding between the flags by the bounds of his "too, too solid flesh," was glad to avail himself of the

services of the young sportsman whenever he could do so. In the Ward Hunt Mr. Maher will be long remembered, for he won the Ward Hunt Cup three times for Mr. "Come Away" Corbally on The Orphan, Sable-tail and Haymaker, and four times on horses belonging to himself. But he never managed to secure absolute ownership of the cup by winning it three times in succession, though better luck attended him in his efforts to retain possession of the Meath Hunt Cup, which he won in 1897, 1898 and 1899. His public riding career came to an end when, in the course of the race for the Ward



W. A. Rouch.

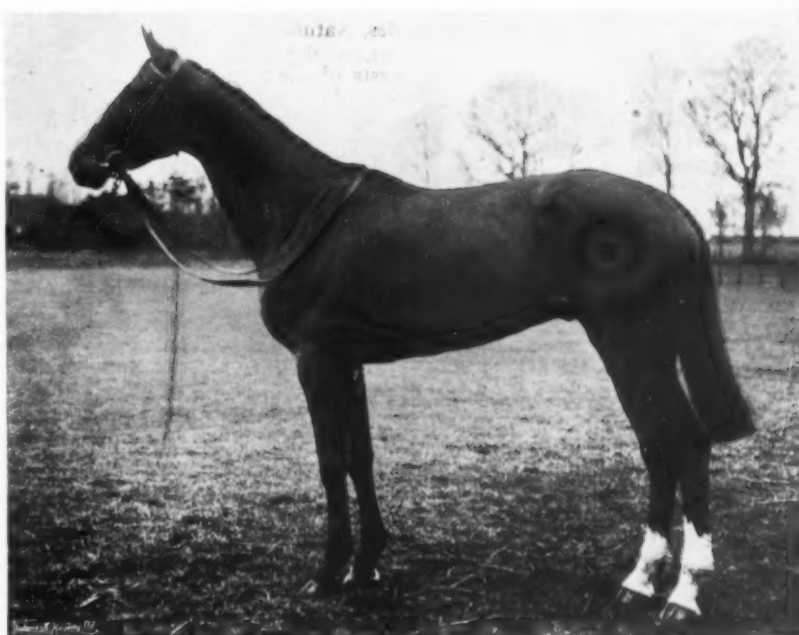
HOLY WAR.

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Hunt Cup, his brother-in-law was killed almost at his side, and the sad accident led him to make and keep a promise that he would ride no more steeplechases. His attention was then turned to the breeding of steeplechase horses, and it cannot be denied that the steeplechasing world is the better for his having done so. No cast off or weeded

out flat racer will satisfy him; his idea—and would there were more to follow his example—is to breed horses specially for the purpose for which they are wanted. Above all, he insists upon giving the young stock time in which to grow and develop before being subjected to the stress and strain of training. Animals bred by him are never asked to settle down to business until they are three years old; so that whatever the future may have in store for them in the shape of long and trying gallops, under heavy weights and over fences of all descriptions, their young two year old frames and muscles have not been unduly taxed, and they bring the vigour of their youth fresh and undiminished to the labours that await them. Jumping for jumpers is the underlying principle which has enabled Mr. Maher to achieve such prominence as a trainer of steeplechase horses. "Begin from the very beginning, go as slowly as you please, take your time about thinking things out, but remember that once in front of a fence, be it big or be it small, over it you have got to go"—those are the notions which every horse in his stable is expected to grasp, and to the credit of their teacher it may be said that they put into public practice the theories they have been taught at school. Another very noticeable feature of Mr. Maher's system of training is that he neither wants, nor indeed will accept, the training of a large number of horses, and herein he is greatly to be commended. The value of a trainer's services, be he trainer of men or of horses, is represented by the amount of personal attention and insight into individual character which he is able to give to the men or horses placed under his charge. However able the staff may be, it is the master mind that is wanted, and no man, however capable, can possibly devote his best energies to the training of a mob of horses, his acquaintance with half of whom is bounded by the information derived from the reports of head-lads, or perhaps a casual glance in the stable or at exercise. There is not one single animal in the stable over which Mr. Maher presides concerning which he does not know all that there is to be known. Disposition, idiosyncrasies of character, constitution, likes and dislikes, possible sources of weakness—all are known and stored away in the trainer's mind, and the knowledge so accumulated and retained bears fruit in the manner in which the horses from the Headbourne Worthy stable come out and victoriously do battle for race after race "over a country." It must, on the other hand, be admitted that, be it luck, or be it the soundest of judgment, the material on which Mr. Maher has to work is of the very best. Holy War, Mount Prospect's Fortune, Cackler, Onward, Ballyhackle, Baeldi, Flaxseed and many others of the best chasers of the present day have been brought out by Mr. Maher, and one hardly knows whether to congratulate him upon the large prices realised for some of them, or to share in the regret which so good a sportsman must feel at seeing them pass on to reap further laurels in other hands.

Among the recent victories achieved by horses bred and trained by the subject of these notes, that of Mount Prospect's Fortune in the Grand Military Gold Cup must take a prominent place. Bought by Captain Paynter for a large sum of money with the special object of winning what has been called the Soldiers' Derby, his first appearance in the handling of his new owner was anything but promising, for in the Burwood Steeplechase at Sandown Park he ran far from kindly, and was, in fact, very badly beaten. Worse was to come, for in the Open Steeplechase at Hurst Park not even such an accomplished horseman as W. Taylor could induce the son of St. Gris to shape well at his fences, and he was beaten by an animal of the moderate class of Longmynd. But by the time that the all-important day arrived Mr. Maher had put matters right, and although his recent performances in public had so far depreciated the horse in the estimation of the majority of people that he was allowed to start at 10 to 1, horse and man were fit and ready for the fray. Not a blunder or mistake was made at any of the fences which had to be negotiated, and an easy victory, greeted with rousing cheers, rewarded the pluck of the owner and the skill of the trainer. What Cackler may do in the future for Mr. Assheton-Smith, who is



W. A. Rouch

MOUNT PROSPECT'S FORTUNE.

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FLAXSEED.

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reputed to have paid the Headbourne Worthy trainer a very large sum for the five year old son of Hachkler and Circe, time alone can show; but he is a good specimen of a big-boned, deep-girthed young jumper, and, if all goes well, should be well worth the price paid for him.

THE BREEDING OF THE POLO PONY.

THE Polo and Riding Pony Society has been embodied for fourteen years, and in that time has established a new breed, for the polo pony bred true to type constitutes practically a new breed. No doubt before the coming of the Polo Pony Stud Book there were riding ponies; but they were only occasional and unlooked-for reversions to ancestors of some native pony breed, or were simply dwarfs or thorough-bred or hunter blood. But the polo ponies exhibited at Islington are, in the majority of instances, not the negative results of accident or reversion, but the positive achievements of careful breeders. The report of a committee appointed to examine into the after-career of polo-bred ponies showed that there was a profitable market for four and five year old ponies of the right type. In order to find out exactly the breeding of ponies, I have looked into the pedigrees of the colts and fillies entered in the last supplement. These ponies are all under the age at which they can be entered in the Stud Book with the necessary certificates of height, and, therefore, they represent the latest efforts of those breeders who have had the opportunity of studying the exhibits at past shows, and have, moreover, the benefit of their own and other people's experience. I find, then, that of the colts and fillies entered in the supplement twenty-eight are by thorough-bred stallions, two are by Arabs, and thirty-three are by polo-bred stallions—i.e., ponies whose sire or dam is entered in the Polo Stud Book. These are technically half-bred horses, and not eligible for the general Stud Book. The mares which have produced these ponies are with few and doubtful exceptions of mixed descent. Thus I have been able to trace Welsh pony blood in thirty-one instances, Exmoor in ten, Darroor and New Forest in one each, hackney in two, Argentine in one, and Arab through the sire in two, through the dam in one. I have not gone back further than the grandam in any case; but these figures are sufficient to show of what strains of blood the polo pony is composed. Owing to the fact of many of the mares being without authenticated pedigree, the proportion of pony blood is probably considerably under-stated, and I think that whenever a mare is not in the general Stud Book we may assume that she has a strain of native pony blood. This is generally of Welsh or Fell pony in the English mares, and of Connemara or Galway in the Irish ponies. We find, then, that of the seven strains contained in our polo ponies the predominant influence is the English thorough-bred, and the next in importance our native, and especially Welsh and Irish, pony blood. This latter infusion of blood acts as a check upon height, and there are in every polo pony influences working in the direction of reversion to a smaller ancestor.

It may, however, be noted that the polo pony, though of mixed origin, has a distinct type of his own. There is no mistaking him. He is not a small race-horse or an enlarged native pony, or a modified Arabian or barb; he is just himself, full of individual character; not a mixture, but a blend. All the strains we have traced and others untraceable, which, nevertheless, are there, have helped to make him what he is; but he is different from every one of them. Everyone who has followed the above analysis will note that the blended strains are not alien to each other. There is a common fountain-head of Eastern blood to which all alike ultimately trace back. Our polo pony is not a mongrel, but only a new variety of that wonderful Eastern stock which has developed along so many different lines. Europe wanted a race-horse, and the English thorough-bred developed through Eclipse to Ormonde. America preferred a trotter, and from the same stock the marvellous trotters and pacers came; so when from its native East Englishmen borrowed polo, horses of Eastern descent were developed into polo ponies at their desire. One interesting and practical question meets us at this point. To what height will these colts and fillies grow? Will they be above or below the size which will entitle them to a Hurlingham certificate? Experience has shown that the majority of them will be well within that. Some will measure less than 14h. tin., which is about the lowest height useful for modern polo; a very few will be about 15h. tin. These latter are rare. The majority will be of Arab height and Arab colouring, according to the law that in these respects crosses or breeds revert to the ancestral type. Of ninety-four colts and fillies only one is not of some shade of bay or chestnut. Bay, as we know now, is the prevailing colour of the pure-bred Eastern horse. In the period of Arabian history before the birth of Mahomet, when the pagan Arabs had brought their horses to perfection, bay, or its variant chestnut, was the prevailing colour of the Arab, as it is becoming to-day that of the race-horse and the polo pony.

X.

SHOOTING.

THE DESTRUCTION OF BRACKEN ON A WELSH MOOR.

EXPERIENCE shows it to be so essential, whether for the growth or for the destruction of any floral life, that all lessons in respect of it be learnt in situations as nearly as may be the same as those in which their results are to be applied, that we have been at the pains to consult two Welsh authorities, the one a head-keeper on, and the other the owner of a Welsh moor, as to the best mode of destroying bracken in that part of the country. The latter of the two whom we have consulted writes as follows: "The only certain way of getting rid of fern is to mow it three times one year when it is green; it will only probably want one other dose of the scythe next year. It comes up with us about the last week in May and the first week in June. When it is in the early state, then it is time to cut it first. This, of course, is an expensive process in some instances. *Substitutes*.—An old hay-mower, set high, if there are not too many ant heaps and ups and downs. I have tried a larch pole, all wound round with barbed wire, pulled by two horses attached to both ends. This bruises and damages the fern, of course, considerably. I cannot vouch for it that it exterminates it thoroughly. Many people only go at their fern in the autumn, and then it is a hard job reaping it. Of course, it is right for fodder and litter; but, even if it was, then a second time over it would not do so much good as cutting it when green. I have cut three times and bruised with larch pole and got rid of fern when I wanted to. Then, a new process of inoculated seeds, they say, has destroyed heather. Seeds inoculated in this case were clover and grass. I wonder if some day inoculated seeds sown among fern plants would douse them." It may be noticed that this useful and practical reply does not touch the point as to whether the cutting of the fern would be apt to alarm the nesting grouse. It is to be admitted that it hardly seems possible that the cutting could be done without causing them some alarm; but this could be reduced to a minimum by care in avoiding the exact localities of the nests, and, in any case, if the bracken can be so thoroughly bled to death (and our Welsh landowner writes, as we happen to know, out of a personal experience of the subject, to which he has given much of his own attention) in a single year, it might be well worth while to run the risk of giving the birds a little uneasiness during this one year for the sake of their future benefit. The inoculated seed idea is, it is to be feared, not yet to be regarded as coming within the sphere of practical politics. In the second reply—that from the head-keeper of one of the very best grouse moors in Wales—the point about the nesting birds is particularly noticed, but he writes from rather high, cold ground, where bracken is likely to be rather later than in the part of Wales from which the other reply comes. He indicates, however, what might everywhere be a possible plan—to wait to cut the fern till birds are hatched, although he admits that the earlier the fern is cut the better. To leave uncut islands where a bird is nesting is, no doubt, the right plan, and the ease with which young bracken can be cut off with a stick is well worthy of attention. His letter is as follows: "In reply to your enquiry as to the best means of destroying bracken on a grouse moor I will give you my own experience as far as it goes. We have a lot of bracken here, and began to try to get rid of it in 1906. In the thick patches, where there was nothing but the bracken, we cut it with scythes, taking care it was cut as near the ground as possible. This was rather difficult the first time over owing to the accumulation of dead bracken, but by doing so the young shoots that were not above it were cut off, and it also made the second cutting easier. In the parts where a scythe could not be used, the bracken was knocked on with sticks. It was all gone over twice, some of the thick patches three times, and on the whole there was a very marked difference in the growth in 1907. In 1907 the parts cut in 1906 were gone over once only, which allowed us to do some fresh ground twice over, and so we hope to extend our operations each year. As regards the time for doing it, the earlier the better once the bracken is high enough to be got at. It is very easily broken off with a stick when young. I find most of our birds have hatched by the time we start on the bracken; but when we come on a nest a patch is left round it and cut afterwards. I should not care about trying the beam on a grouse moor. I think it would effectually do away with any nest or young birds that lay in its path. I may say that on one big bank which we treated in 1906 we could see to pick up on it in 1907."

THE DECREASE OF WILDFOWL.

FROM a shooting-man's point of view, one of the most lamentable and noteworthy facts has been the steady decrease in the numbers of wildfowl which have visited our shores in recent years; and in many cases the real cause of such a decrease is hard to discover. Although this remark applies more or less to most haunts of wildfowl in

the British Isles, the writer, while penning these lines, has fixed most prominently in his mind the problem of our Southern English coasts, where once the numerous bays and rivers, or wide stretches of marsh and open moorlands, were the haunts of countless wildfowl during the winter months. How vividly comes back to our minds the impression made in former winters by the advent of the first northerly or easterly gales, bringing as they did before them countless flocks of geese, ducks, widgeon and teal, together with snipe and golden or green plover, besides the many kinds of rarer migrants, all coming from Northern climes and passing in continuous streams towards the West. Alas! nothing save a memory remains to us to-day of those glorious times. A matter of thirty, or even twenty, years ago a sportsman who cared to walk along the river banks, or over the bogs and moors during frosty weather in such places as Hants or Dorset, could obtain enough shots to satisfy the most exacting of men. To-day, were he to walk the same ground and haunts of wildfowl over which, in his youth, he often expended a bagful of cartridges per diem, in most places he would fail to get the same number of shots in a month. Rivers which ducks and teal were wont to haunt in hundreds, or bogs and marshes where snipe would rise in wisps of tens or twenties, now yield but a few shots, which are usually only obtained after many miles of weary walking. Considering that the characters of these rivers and marshes have in no way changed during recent years, we must look for some other cause than this to account for such a diminution in the numbers of our wildfowl.

Wisacres will suggest a number of hypotheses, chief among which may be placed an increase in the number of people who are now shooting as compared with those possessing guns some twenty or thirty years ago. One of the principal causes of destruction among the great migratory flocks of wildfowl has been the use of punt-guns by professional and other shooters. But of recent years there has been a tendency to a decrease in the numbers of professional gunners owing to the lack of sufficient wildfowl in the great estuaries to render shooting for the market a lucrative business. On the other hand, the increase of the 10s. gun licence-holders undoubtedly accounts for the destruction of numerous wildfowl along the foreshores and in places where common rights prevail. But to counterbalance this fact, it may be noted that, whereas some years ago numbers of decoy ponds existed in places where hundreds of wild ducks were annually captured, to-day these decoys have fallen into disuse and practically ceased to exist. Probably at these places more ducks were captured in a month than are now killed in a whole season by the various guns in the same districts. The fact remains that wildfowl no longer visit our shores in the vast numbers that they did in former times. It may be argued that the constant shooting and trapping of them has so depleted the world's supply of all forms of wildfowl that large quantities are no longer left. But this is a fallacy, since anyone who has paid a visit in summer-time to the Arctic regions of Europe, Asia and America, as the present writer has done on more than one occasion in recent years, will encounter such countless millions of wildfowl breeding in those regions that the supply seems still inexhaustible; and, since all these birds, both young and old alike, migrate Southwards as winter approaches, it is a query as to where they find resting-places remote from the haunts of men. Owing to their breeding-grounds lying so far from civilisation, no great destruction from the hand of man ever visits most forms of ducks, geese or snipe in their early youth. But in the case of our friend the woodcock it is another matter, for he breeds in such places as Scandinavia, at no great distance from the abodes of men, and during late years has suffered much in his recently-discovered haunts in Albania and other favourite spots along the basin of the Mediterranean. In our modern days of rapid navigation such places as the woodcock formerly haunted in comparative security have become fairly accessible to the roving sportsman, and hence it is easy to account for a diminution in the numbers which annually visit our shores. It has always been a matter of wonderment to the writer why the method should be adopted by most sportsmen of shooting at a woodcock at all kinds of impossible distances. Thereby numbers of birds are pricked and wounded, and finally perish miserably without being gathered in the bag. It seems the usual practice to treat the woodcock as if he were some form of detested vermin to be destroyed at all costs, rather than killed in a clean and sportsmanlike manner.

C. E. RADCLIFFE.

INTRODUCTION OF RYPER INTO SCOTLAND.

WE have to admit that Mr. Harvie-Brown's letter in our last issue on the above subject very nearly expresses our own views. A certain risk, as well as much interest, there is bound to be in all experiments of the kind, nor is it a fair reply to ask "What the risk can be?" If the danger could be defined, the word experiment would hardly be applicable. The generally accepted view is that ryper and grouse are local varieties of the same species. There can be no doubt that they will cross freely, and about the ultimate results of the crossing there must be some uncertainty. The ryper has not

the peculiar and abnormal moulting habit of our own bird. Without entering on the highly speculative discussion of the circumstances which have led to the development of that singular habit in our grouse, we may infer that it is in some special way suited to their environment, and the experiment may (we do not say that it will) result in showing that inter-breeding with a bird of the more ordinary moulting habit will not prove for the advantage of the stock. It should be interesting to see whether (and if at all, in what process of time) the ryper, in the same environment as our grouse, will develop the same habit. We cannot pretend to foresee any definite risk, but if we had the fortune to be owners of grouse moors marching with the woodland into which the ryper are introduced, we should feel a little anxiety about the result, at the same time as much interest in watching it.

THEIR POSSIBILITIES AS BIRDS FOR SPORT.

On the other hand, we do not think that Mr. Harvie-Brown, writing more from the naturalist's than the sportsman's point of view, does quite full justice to the possible improvement of woodland shooting, which it is the special intention of the introduction of the ryper to bring about. He writes rather as if the Norwegian birds would give little better than "pot shots" for the rook rifle. We see no reason (with pleasant visions in our mind of the "snips" flight among the tree-tops of the occasional grouse or partridge coming out of the woods when beaten for the evasive black-game) why the ryper should not give good sport for the gun in these surroundings, and this we are bound to admit, although not enamoured of the experiment on mere general grounds. We are glad to see that the fantastic idea of the ryper occupying some non-existent zone between the grouse and ptarmigan had no place in the plan of the introducer.

LITTLE HARM DONE BY THE SNOW.

In spite of the very heavy snowstorm which visited Scotland and other haunts of the grouse—notably some of the Welsh moors—it is satisfactory to learn from many sources in different parts of the grouse country that the birds are not thought to have suffered any severe injury. The snow, as a rule, did not lie long enough to cause them real distress. The grouse is a hardy person, and since the storms came when they did and not a month or so later, in the nesting-time, little harm was done. Reports of the wintering of red deer also are good, in spite of the hard weather, and except for the partridges, which cannot be expected to recover their numbers all at once after last year's failure, there is no apparent reason now why next shooting season should not be all that we could wish. But, of course, the critical time is to come.

OPTICAL DELUSIONS.

One wonders how often it has happened to a shooter in a grouse butt to half raise his gun, under the momentary impression that a driven grouse was coming at him, when it was only a bumble-bee or some other insect which had crossed the field of his vision, close to his eye, at a moment when it was focussed at much longer range. The most extreme instance of the kind is given in the classical story of the man who fired at what he believed to be a snipe going away in front of him, when, in reality, the bird had twisted away right behind him. The explanation of this aberration was that he shot with a glass in his

eye, and that a speck on the glass had given him the momentary impression that he saw right in front of him the snipe which he had heard give the scold which is the signal of the rising of one of these little birds. Sometimes the gunner is much alarmed by a fear that his eyesight is going when these foolish incidents occur, but there is no real cause for anxiety. It is an accident which happens with the best regulated optics.

THE DESTRUCTIVE MAGPIE.

It is much more pleasant to write in the cause of mercy than of iron-handed justice; but for the sake of truth discrimination has to be made, and after lately extolling the virtues of the weasel we have to speak hardly of the villainies of another of the keeper's suspects, the magpie. A case, fully proved, has come to our knowledge lately of magpies making a regular habit of attacking poultry-farms in Gloucestershire and pouncing on the young chickens, killing them and carrying them off. The worst of the clever but destructive corvine family is that one and all of them, once they have formed a habit of this kind, seem to follow it for the rest of their own lives, and, worse still, to transmit it to their children, and even, by force of example, to their companions of the same age. The magpie is not common enough to be much of a trouble in most parts of England. It would be interesting if a French reader would tell us whether in that country, where they are far more generally common, they attack the young chickens.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SNIPES USING THEIR BILLS IN RISING

SIR,—The only evidence I have to offer on this point is negative. Still, such as it is, I give it. A few months ago I noticed a wisp of snipe and some green plover feeding near the edge of a swamp known as the Loch of Kinnordy in Forfarshire. With a little care I was able to crawl up to within 40 yds. of them, when I was hidden behind a small hay-cole, and from this shelter I watched them through a stalking-glass, giving some twenty to twenty-four diameters, and thus bringing me apparently within 2 yds. of the birds. What struck me most was the position in which the snipe carried their bills; they were never held horizontally, but always sloping downwards at an angle of 45 deg. When feeding the bill was not pushed into the ground perpendicularly as I had expected, but thrust forward at the same angle in a series of quick dabs. What the special delicacy was I could not make out. Presently a man on a bicycle, passing some 60 yds. behind me, put them on the alert; heads and necks were craned up to the most unexpected height, bills still being carried "at the slope." Next moment they crouched low, and were partly concealed behind tussocks of short swamp grass; in another instant they were off, as though shot out of a trap, up and across the wind. There was certainly no use of the bill in rising; indeed, any attempt of the kind must have led to disaster, for the ooze was too soft to have allowed any leverage of the point of the bill, which is what I understood your correspondent described. I have never seen a snipe rise except up wind, though once the bird is in the air the turn down wind is often made like a flash.—CHARLES LYELL.

[FURTHER NOTES ON SHOOTING WILL BE FOUND ON OUR LATER PAGES.]

ON THE GREEN.

EDITED BY HORACE HUTCHINSON.

THE EDINBURGH BURGESSES ON THE AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP.

THE Edinburgh Burgess Golfing Society seems to be the first to have given any public voice to an opinion, carrying a vote with it, on the suggestions put forward by the amateur championship delegates at their last meeting. These suggestions had for their purpose to limit the numbers of those who enter for this competition, and among the means to that end it had been indicated that the clubs might, perhaps, take upon themselves the rather invidious function of determining whether this one or that of their members was a fit and proper person to enter for the championship. Some idea was mooted that none but those who stood at scratch, or lower, on the handicap lists should be allowed to enter, or that any who entered should play at scratch for ever (or the better part of that period) after. The Burgessess, very rightly as it seems to me, have said they can give no countenance to such ideas as these; they have also indicated that, in their opinion, any "sectional" arrangement of selection (presumably rather on the lines of the *News of the World* competition) would detract a great deal from the interest in the championship play. Herein, also, it seems to me that they are wise and prudent; but then they go on to the recommendation that as the numbers of the competitors are now afflictively large (wherein everybody will agree with them), a form of scoring qualifying competition to reduce the numbers to something reasonable should precede the actual match play. In this proposition I do not follow their lead. It seems to me that the time may come, and probably will come soon, when the increasing multitude of entries will make some such plan inevitable, but I hardly think we have quite gone so far as that yet; and while it is still possible to keep to the match play throughout I am all for doing so, though I am very well aware of its inconvenience and frequent inequity.

AT BIARRITZ.

There is one golfer (let us charitably hope there are many more, but at least there is this one very notably) who is evidently in extremely fine form this year and at this time: that is Mr. Douglas Currie. It is only the other day that we were recording a win by him in one of the numerous competitions at North Berwick, with such men as Mr. Laidlay and Mr. Maxwell well behind him. Now the latest that we hear of him is winning at Biarritz, on a very windy day (and it can blow at Biarritz), with a score of 74, which means splendid golf, for, although the Biarritz course does not in all respects come up to the highest ideals of what is wanted in a golf links, still none but those who know mighty little of it will deny that it makes the shrewdest demands on a golfer's accuracy and control of his ball—qualities which are

difficult to exhibit in the tearing gales which fall on those cliffs. So Mr. Currie should be a tower of strength as an aid to Mr. Angus Hambro—for this is understood to be the selected pair—when they meet their enemies of Pau, Mr. Hutchings, the ever-green, and Mr. Ferrier-Keir.

THE LADIES' COUNTY MATCHES.

An old French golfer writer is credited with the sagacious comment that *souvent femme varie*. A similar observation is found in an even earlier Italian writer on the same subject, in the form *Donna è mobile*. Doubtless this is somewhat more true of the golfing ladies of the volatile Latin races than of our own; nevertheless, its general justice has received striking confirmation lately in the paradoxical results of some of the ladies' county matches. In the first place, Kent gave Essex a decisive beating, one lady of the former county beating one of the latter by ten up and eight to play in an eighteen-hole match, which was hardly treating her like a lady at all. Then Kent in turn were severely beaten by Hampshire. "How much more severely, therefore," in the words of the immortal Euclid, "would Essex be beaten by Hampshire!" Unhappily for any shred of a reputation for intelligence which some may still suppose Euclid to have possessed, the actual outcome of the match between Essex and Hampshire was that the latter county did indeed come off victor; but, although the teams of the respective counties were substantially the same in each case, the victory of Hampshire was only achieved by the most desperate fighting. Mrs. Cuthell (once Miss Rhona Adair), for Hampshire, was playing Mrs. Cumming of Essex. These two, first on the list, were latest to start, and the rest of the team match being all square, with their game yet to finish, all turned on it. And then this match also ended all square! So they had to go out again for their respective county's honour, and it was not till the twenty-first hole that Mrs. Cuthell scored the win for Hampshire.

THE LONDON AMATEUR FOURSOMES.

Certainly the London Amateur Foursomes Tournament has produced some wonderfully good matches. The Blackheath pair were a little pestered by the luck of the draw, but it gave them the chance to win a fine match against New Zealand at the thirty-eighth hole. After that they had to meet the pair that I said at the first I thought more likely than any other single couple that could be picked to go right through—Mr. Fry and Mr. Worthington of Mid-Surrey. They met at Woking. I did not see the match, but it must have been a queer one, and queerly interesting. It began by the Blackheath pair, Mr. Spencer and Mr. Johnstone, getting a bit of a lead, but only of two holes, which the others soon knocked off, and,

taking the lead in their turn, went to luncheon with a hole to the good. Playing with a splendid post-prandial courage, they added four more holes to their score by the time the turn was reached, and, losing one of them, stood dormy four, and yet, even so, only won by one on the last green. The play is said to have been good all round and creditable to winners and losers alike.

ERRATIC REPORTING.

Daily papers should be a little careful and remember their enormous responsibility to a confiding and purchasing public in the way they record golf matches. First they told us that Stanmore had been beaten by Ashdown Forest in the amateur foursomes. The truth is the other way: Stanmore won. Then, as to the beating of Walton Heath by Northwood, about which, in the main, there seems no doubt at all, one paper says that Mr. Dick and Mr. Fowler were the beaten pair, another that it was Mr. Fowler and Mr. Gollan, and yet a third that it was Mr. Dick and Mr. Gollan. So, having paid your penny, you may take your choice, but, for choice, I rather think it was the two last named. Northwood is going strong. The match was a good one, and only decided on the last green. Another of these matches, ending also at the final hole, was that in which Hintham was beaten by West Drayton. Mr. Hemmerle and Mr. O'Brien Taylor were the winners of this, beating Mr. Howarth and Mr. Lee.

THE LONDON PROFESSIONALS' TOURNAMENT.

It is undeniable that a London professionals' foursome tournament with Braid, Taylor and Vardon not competing, is something like the play of "Hamlet" with no less than three Princes of Denmark missing. Nevertheless, in their absence the present tournament is proceeding in as interesting a fashion as the heart of golfer could desire. At Northwood, in the second round (by the by, how well Mr. Hoffmann played there lately, winning last Saturday's medal with a score of 77, which looks well as compared with some of the professionals' work), all the right men won (so, at least, thought most people except those who were beaten), and the third round has drawn itself in a manner which defers the meeting of the interesting couples until as late on in the affair as was reasonably possible. At risk of incurring the undying hostility of those not named, it may be suggested that these most interesting pairs are Smith and Tingey, who won last year, Mayo and Duncan and White and Sayers. If Mayo and Duncan and last year's winners both win in the third heat they will meet in the fourth, which will be the semi-final. The strongest couple in the field are Mayo and Duncan, in my humble judgment.

ON TIP-TOE.

When Burns wrote the lines so often quoted:

"Oh wad some Power the giftie gie us
Tae see oursel's as ithers see us,"

he was, no doubt, reckoning without the "kodak." As the camera has shown us horses winning the Derby with action which looks as if it must instantly precipitate them on their heads, so the kodak has betrayed many of us in unexpected postures and situations, giving us, in some measure, the "giftie," not wholly desirable or flattering (whatever Burns may have thought), of knowing how we appear in others' eyes. So in the accompanying picture, Mr. Fairlie, snapping me with his kodak, has been my betrayer—to myself. The photograph is taken at the moment of the meeting of club and ball—it is not a mere affair of photographing the "waggle"—and at this moment, as is seen, I am up on the toes of both feet. Neither heel is near the ground. I had not the least idea that I did thus. But it seems that I am not singular in doing so. The same photographer was skilful enough to catch Captain Hutchison also at the same critical moment of the swing, taking him, too, from behind, and he, too, exhibits the same aberration, as I should have been inclined to think it—both heels well off the ground and all the weight on the toes. Is it always thus? With the eye it is not very easy to see. The camera is quicker-sighted.

H. G. H.

THE "ABANDONED" BALL.

Does the player ever lose his right of property in the ball which he has driven into the rough and cannot find within the stipulated 5 min. allowed by the rule? Though it is a lost ball in a technical golfing sense, it would be more accurate to describe it as an "abandoned" ball. But the player always cherishes the hope that he may be able again to recover the ball, and will often search for it later in the day when the match is over. The point is full of interest from the fact that lately at the annual meeting of the Moray Golf Club in Elgin a motion was proposed by Sheriff Webster to the effect that "all golf balls abandoned on the golf course become the property of the club, and all balls found on the golf course must be delivered to the person appointed by the club to receive them."

A PIECE OF COMMUNAL PROPERTY.

The meaning of this doctrine is that the ownership of the "abandoned" ball becomes merged in the general body of the members of the club. It is the antithesis of the common view, both among golfers and their caddies, "who finds, keeps." As an experiment on the moral side of golf government it would certainly be interesting to know how the rule works, whether it is generally observed both by caddies and players, and what is the total product in the restitution to the committee of the "abandoned" balls found on the course. An appeal is made for the general observance of an ethical principle which, rightly or wrongly, seems to go hard against the grain of the ordinary pre-latory instincts of human nature. In a miter of that kind the captive powers of the police are usually standing close behind the moral appeal; but hitherto the everyday guardian of our public security has

not, happily, been much seen on the golf links either in connection with lost balls or any other aspect of the game.

THE FINDER AND HIS REWARD.

Though the law may uphold the golfing position as established by the wording of the motion cited, and declare that an "abandoned" ball is not necessarily a lost ball, the practice of the links from time out of mind has all been working in the opposite direction to the legal principle. Caddies on the prowl are familiar features of all golf courses which are open to the inroad of the general public. They prefer to hunt for "abandoned" balls, or to steal them secretly when the ground favours their plan of campaign, than to take their chance of being hired at the club to accompany the players in their legitimate occupation. They see narrowly, but clearly, that more money can be earned by prowling for balls in the rough ground near ugly bunkers than in carrying clubs. With an elaborate show of courtesy they help the player to search for his ball, but they rarely mean that he shall find it within the time limits prescribed by the rule. When it is "abandoned" one of them picks it up and claims it as his property, selling it perhaps to one of the succeeding couples for a sixpence, if the ball happens to be in good condition. It being a rule, therefore, that the finder of lost property generally receives a reward in proportion to the value of the thing found, the finder of an "abandoned" ball must have his honesty inspired by a scale of fees proportionate to the less or more battered condition of the ball which is restored to the club.

"THE SCOTLAND YARD" OF BALLS.

Here then comes in the difficulty of working practically such a rule as that foreshadowed at Elgin. If the club says that all "abandoned" balls found by caddies and players belong to it without the concession of recompense to the finder, it is almost certain that, caddie human nature being what it is, the proportion of balls restored will have a poor relation to the aggregate number lost. The players themselves may be expected to give up found balls unconditionally, for their community of interest in preserving their own "abandoned" property will act as an incentive to see the rule observed. But not so with the caddie. He will expect 3d. or 6d., according as the found ball is middling or good; and when the executive have paid the reward to the finder the cases are sure to arise with some players that they will prefer to relinquish all property in the ball rather than buy it back at the price which was given to a boy for its recovery. The club thus will be out of pocket, and not even a general auction at set intervals of all the "abandoned" balls gathered in may realise as much money as was originally spent in minor rewards to inculcate in obscure minds the doctrine that there is a broad distinction in ethics between a ball which is lost and one which is "abandoned."

THE BUYING OF LOST BALLS.

It is a good and healthy policy to pursue, however, for executives of clubs to preach without cessant on to their members the dangerous unwisdom of players buying "abandoned" balls from caddies or loafers about the links. No player can help feeling that his self-respect is undergoing the process of being just a little smirched when he is engaged in a chaffer with a loafing caddie who is professing to sell him a real lost ball. The ball may have been really lost and found in all honesty of intent and purpose; but there is always an interior feeling clamouring for assertion in the breast of the buyer that it is just as likely to have been deliberately marked down and stolen at one of the holes in the round. The uglier side of the transaction is occasionally relieved by the piquant comedy of the player being offered for sale his own ball so unaccountably lost on fairly clear ground. When, therefore, the players unite with loyalty in the common feeling that it is, first of all, necessary to destroy the market for the sale of lost or "abandoned" balls, the occupation of the loafing and dishonest caddie is gone. As the members refuse to buy balls from him, the caddie, by the pressure of his circumstances, is forced to go to the professional and club maker to realise what amount of profit he may most speedily. It is a good solution and where it has been tried it has worked satisfactorily.

A. J. R.

FOURSOMES.

THE season of foursomes is now upon us, and no doubt the interest taken in the London foursomes, amateur and professional, has done much for that noblest form of golf. From a spectator's point of view, there is nothing like a foursome, at least for him who cares to study the temperaments and idiosyncrasies of the players as well as their golf. He can see how they comport themselves under the double misfortune of a good opponent and a bad partner. The pair to repay attention will be one with whom each stroke of any importance will be made the occasion of a cabinet council; a proper amount of crouching, walking up and down and examining with an eye of disfavour the most innocuous blades of grass. Its attitude surrounds the partners with a fine atmosphere of combination, and, if the day be warm enough and the spectators, therefore, not frozen with waiting, undoubtedly enhances the importance and interest of the occasion. There are sure to be some persons of jaundiced and embittered minds who will not enjoy this magnificent sight. Among them may probably be numbered the opponents; if they are leading they may be able to treat the performance with a contemptuous



BETRAYED BY THE CAMERA.

smile, but if they are already down they will resent being kept on tenterhooks till another hole is added to their deficit. Those who are certain to resent these confabulations are the people playing behind the foursome, who are probably under the absurdly erroneous impression that their own match is equally important and should not be kept back. There is one great merit in this almost exaggerated combination, and that is that it bespeaks a power of concentration and an intense determination to go on trying however unpromising the situation. A player who is in his glory in a foursome is Mr. John Low. A famous old St. Andrews professional and caddie once said to him: *a propos* of a certain shot, "I could play that shot fine, Mr. Low, when I was in my pomp." Mr. Low is certainly "in his pomp" when engaged in an important foursome. The Olympian air with which he will walk the length of a long putt from his ball to the hole, calmly survey the scene and walk back to the ball must be seen to be appreciated. We can all walk up and down our putts, but most of us do it with a harassed, anxious look and appear partly conscious that we are making everyone wait a long time for a putt that may be a failure. Not so Mr. Low; he appears quite serene and unruffled, wholly unconscious of his surroundings and entirely bent on making the best possible putt, a feat which he accomplishes at least as often as any golfer living. When the putting has to be done by his partner, he will be at pains to advise as to the line, and if need be to indicate it in a way to cheer and inspire the most timid of partners. If a shot of doubtful length has to be played through the green, caddie and partner will both be consulted ere one out of a vast sheaf of irons be selected, which to the mere Philistine might appear to differ only as Tweedledum differed from Tweedledee. It is all very impressive, for Mr. Low undoubtedly has the grand manner as a foursome player. What is more, he is the most cheering and long-suffering of partners, and to play with or against him in a foursome is in itself a liberal education. No one is a keener foursome player than Mr. Croome, who has often partnered Mr. Low in the matches of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society. His devotion to a good foursome amounts almost to a religious belief; anyone anxious to draw down on himself a flood of lucid and convincing argument will do well to tell Mr. Croome that, in his opinion, a four-ball match is a far better game. Mr. Croome and Mr. Colt are a formidable combination who have often played together, both for the society and for Sunningdale. They have one fine pair of scapels hanging at their girdle, namely, those of Mr. John Ball and Mr. Graham, whom they defeated last year upon their native heath of Hoylake. No one tries harder or putts more carefully than Mr. Colt. To watch the intent and menacing air of this pair while they argue this way and that as to the line of a slippery putt is, as I know from personal experience, distinctly frightening, and does not make it in the least more likely that one will hole one's own. It is rather curious that, whereas at lawn tennis there have been so many pairs of brothers who have become famous in combination, there are not very many golfing brothers among the amateurs to do great things in foursomes. There are the Blackwells and the Hunters. Then, of course, other pairs of brothers; but they seem to see enough of each other without foursomes. Mr. Osmund and Mr. Denys Scott generally appear to separate; perhaps out of kindness to puny opponents who would be entirely crushed by a series of portentous drives.

There is a general impression that one great driver and one great putter are a better combination than two people whose talents are more equally divided. If this opinion is a correct one, the Blackwells should be the ideal pair. We have Mr. Edward Blackwell for the driving, though he often putts abominably well, too, nowadays; but, still, I should imagine not quite so consistently as his brother Ernley—indeed, very few people do. If Mr. Ernley Blackwell's driving is not always all that his admirers could wish, his putting, as far as I know, never falls below a certain fairly high standard. He is one of those persons—Mr. Frank Mitchell is another—who always putt well, and usually inhumanly well. I believe these two brothers have hardly, if ever, lost a foursome. Last summer Mr. Ernley Blackwell was away, and Mr. Edward had to take another brother, Walter, into partnership. These two, however, met their masters in Mr. Campbell and Mr. Pollock, who, indeed, on their day—and that is a not unimportant proviso—would master most people. They hit the ball so hard and so far—indeed, Mr. Pollock seems to hurl himself upon it in a sort of divine frenzy, ere he pursues it at a gait that would ensure his disqualification in a walking race. Mr. Campbell, however, is deliberate enough, and his putting manner, if less majestic than Mr. Low's—indeed, he darts about the green like a swallow—is certainly no whit less careful.

There are some interesting pairs still left in the London Amateur Foursomes. A very well-known one, always sure of plenty of supporters, are the two stalwarts of the Mid-Surrey Club, Messrs. Fry and Worthington. I fancy that Mr. Fry, although he plays a good deal of golf, does not, apart from these competitions, play very many foursomes. And yet he is almost the beau-ideal of a foursome player. He is wonderfully

imperturbable and has an extraordinary power of concentration. No one knows better exactly what he can do, and he sets himself down determinedly to do it. You will very seldom see Mr. Fry underclub himself. How often do we see the best of golfers hesitate between a cleek and a brassie, and, finally, taking the former, be lamentably short of the hole. Mr. Fry is always taking the longer rather than the shorter club, for no one more thoroughly appreciates the truth of the ancient saw that the hole will not come to you; and I have heard Mr. Fry say that he believes that any success he has attained at golf is due to that admirable habit of taking the longer club. A good many people, perhaps, would vote rather for his consistently excellent putting, but Mr. Fry has a wonderfully sound judgment, and I am well content to take his own judgment of his game. Mr. Worthington's game is in some ways more qualified to shine in a four-ball match, for he is always to be relied on for some very brilliant holes. At any rate, he and Mr. Fry ought to make a fine combination; if any two men in the world understand each other's game, they should do so by now.

The rival Richmond Club at Sudbrook Park would have had a good pair in Mr. H. G. Taylor and Mr. Abercromby if Mr. Taylor had been well enough to play. With the possible exception of that eccentric genius, Mr. H. G. B. Ellis, I should be disposed to imagine that Mr. Taylor possesses more clubs than anyone in the world. It is a fine sight to see him selecting his very particular favourite from his vast stock preparatory to a championship, and he arrives on the course literally "bearing his sheaves with him"; persons of an excessively humane disposition must be tempted to pity his heavily-laden caddie. For an easy and graceful swing he is hard to beat—a fine model for those who wish to compass that difficult achievement, a long ball with no apparent effort. This absence of effort he carries into his whole game, for no one has a greater gift of appearing entirely unconcerned. An eminent Chief Justice some hundred years ago committed himself to the statement that "the Devil himself knoweth not the mind of a man." I am sure that that gentleman would not know what is in the mind of Mr. Taylor while the most nervous of partners is attacking the most critical of putts.

B. D.

CORRESPONDENCE.

RICHARD JEFFERIES'S FATHER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It was in the autumn of 1885 that I first remember seeing the father of Richard Jeffries, and it was not till some time after our becoming acquainted that we knew him to be the father of the author, well known in the literary world for his essay on *Nature*. He had worked for some time in the garden of our house near Bath, and must have been then nearing seventy. He passed away at the age of eighty in 1906. His fine intellectual face, broad forehead and refined, handsome features could not fail to interest, and his keen love of *Nature* proved him to be no unworthy father of so gifted and talented a son. How well I remember the poor old father's grief at the death of his son Richard in August, 1887, and his pride and pleasure as many words of praise appeared in newspapers and magazines, and the talent, for long unappreciated, seemed at last to be receiving its merited meed of favour. Jeffries would often speak of how, when in his prosperous days he worked on his little farm near Swindon, he tried to interest his son Richard from boyhood in everything connected with *Nature*, noting the song of birds, their haunts and habits, and all the varied beauties of forest, field and woodland, with the flowers peculiar to each locality. After the death of his son, the old man gradually became more feeble, and with great reluctance had to give up the work and active life he loved so well. Jeffries and his wife lived for some years in apartments in Bath, but he often came to see us, and seldom left without a nosegay from the garden. He would ask for the buds of flowers such as iris or poppy, that he and his old wife might watch them expand. His wife was stricken with paralysis for more than a year before she died, and it was touching to learn with what love and tenderness the old husband waited upon her. He outlived her about a year and a-half. He constantly wandered up to the beautiful cemetery at Locksbrook. "It is good for us to come here," he said. In a letter received from him, dated November 24th, 1896, just a month before he passed to his rest on Christmas Eve, he says: "There is now a marble headstone to the memory of the mother of Richard Jeffries—placed there last week; I saw it yesterday—I thought our lot would have been, like that of the rude fathers of the hamlet, nothing but a mouldering heap beneath the yew tree shade." We said good-bye to him on a beautiful August day, 1896, in Locksbrook Cemetery, as we stood beside the grave of "one" whose kindness to him he had never forgotten. We felt, indeed, it was "farewell" as we turned to look for the last time on the fine old face.—ISABELLA WARDER.

THE CULTIVATION OF CEREALS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—As a subscriber of many years' standing to your excellent journal, and knowing how keen is the interest shown by you in all that concerns country life, I deem it but right to submit the following project to your notice. It is a project which I hold to be of world-wide importance and as vitally concerning England herself. Russia has already, during the last two or three years, tested the cultivation of cereals—wheat, rye and oats—on a new principle. The seed is sown in small temporary beds, each grain being deposited separately. On coming out, the sprouts are allowed about three weeks' growth, and are then transplanted in fields carefully ploughed

beforehand. The fields are broken up into beds, with a narrow passage between each. Each bed is of a breadth sufficient to receive three rows of young shoots of some cereal under consideration. (Oats are planted in five rows.) In transplanting care must be taken to set each plant about 1½ in. deeper than it grew before. If this is properly done the young plant throws out additional roots, resulting in the appearance of fifty and more stalks, which means a corresponding number and more of ears of grain, instead of the three to five stalks per root derived from the old-fangled method. Investigation shows that only one pood (36lb. English) of seed instead of eight to nine poods, covers one dessiatin (about 2.86 acres), which area, manipulated as aforesaid, gives an output of about 600 poods, and of about 1,000 poods and more, by liquid manure enrichment, as compared with 100-150 poods, resulting from ordinary cultivation. You will probably suggest that transplanting is both too heavy and costly an experiment to pay its way on a large scale. The expense and trouble will, however, be amply repaid, in that the yield will be five times and more in excess of nowadays harvests, and that droughts and famine will no longer impair or threaten them. The new method being still in its infancy, there is much room for development both from economical and supply standpoints. The new process will also introduce a new era in agriculture, and Britain may become independent of over-sea produce, or, at any rate, during a period of warfare or other bad times. The system is specially commendable to small holders, where the work is managed by the family alone. I have in view another and simpler form of grain cultivation, which does not, however, give results as good as the above. I am prepared to give you information on the subject if you wish it. I am not aware that the new system has been given a fair trial in England. I wish to point out that the process is not an illusory one, but is really carried out in this country as aforesaid. There is much room left yet for study and research in the way of improvement and economy both as regards methods and labour saving. Once accomplished a great stimulus and impulse will bring about an exodus to the country, and fresh and vigorous life will thus be restored together with a full settlement of the vexed agrarian question, which will be solved at last.—G. REIN.

[We have submitted our correspondent's letter to Mr. Primrose McConnell, who comments on it as follows: The system herein described is not the least likely to be successful in this country because of the cost of labour. It is a variation on the practice of dibbling in the seed, which had a certain vogue a generation ago, but is probably now entirely obsolete. The principal benefit to be obtained was the saving of seed, and in the days when wheat was worth 10s. per bushel this was worth while, but the gain in this line would be very little now, while the labour involved in the Russian system must be enormous. Everyone knows, of course, that giving a corn plant of any kind room enough will enable it to tiller out tremendously, but there is a limit to this; excessive tillering weakens the plant and makes the crop later in ripening, so we prefer more plants to the square yard and less tillering. As to increasing the yield five times, that might be possible in Russia, where the average yield per acre is one of the lowest on the list, but not in Great Britain. The average yield of wheat here is nearly four quarters per acre; this may be doubled by modern methods at some time in the future, but it will not be by dibbling or thin seeding.—ED.]

A TREE-CLIMBING FOX.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I wonder if any of the readers of your interesting paper have ever known a case of a fox living up a tree? My gamekeeper was trapping rabbits a few weeks ago under one very thickly covered with ivy. He noticed the unmistakable smell of a fox, and felt convinced that one was, or had been, recently in the neighbourhood, and set to work to find him if possible. He looked round the tree and all about, noticed some funny little scratches on the bark on one side where the ivy had not grown so thickly, and before long he espied the sharp nose and beady eyes of Mr. Reynard peeping out among a dense mass of ivy 30ft. to 40ft. up the tree. The keeper kept an eye on him and soon discovered he was not there by accident, but that his lodgings were permanent. May this climbing propensity not account for the mysterious way hounds sometimes suddenly lose scent of a fox?—E. P.

FEATHERED FRIENDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Your correspondent's account of two tame jackdaws in your issue of February 15th tempts me to give you a short account of my experiences with these birds. I have had three at different times, all taken from the nest, and although all alike became perfectly tame they varied considerably in temper and disposition. "Jack the First" had a more striking personality than the other two put together, and his memory is still green among us. He was a bold bad bird, and his career was one of uninterrupted wickedness. His reputation was bad in the vicinity, and some said he was "possessed." He slept in a roomy cage at night, but otherwise had perfect liberty, and went out in all weathers. He would drop in at intervals during the day, and was allowed to stay in as long as he behaved himself; but these visits generally ended in his summary ejection, though when guilty of bigger misdemeanours than usual he did not s and upon the order of his going, but went. He delighted in tormenting the dog, a long-suffering fox-terrier. If Jack found the dog sleeping peacefully upon the hearth he would, after carefully reconnoitering, make a dart at the dog's tail, give it one vicious peck and quickly retire to the other side of the room. When the dog had settled down again he would go through the same tactics as before, but this time go for the dog's nose, and immediately perch somewhere out of danger. He had a vocabulary of his own, saying several words very distinctly. When he was talkative he was seldom in mischief, but silence on his part was ominous. To slip in at an open bedroom window and pick every movable article on to the floor was a frequent trick if not watched. He never hid things, his mischief was always wanton. At the tea-table he had his own particular corner. To tease him he was sometimes given bread or

cake without butt, of which he was very fond. He would turn it over and look at the other side, and finding no butter would make for the dish and help himself. He had all a jackdaw's curiosity. Strangers greatly interested him, and on such occasions he would soon show himself and march up and down before the visitor, eyeing him all the time in his most impertinent manner. One day a gentleman in the office on business, and having a whisky and soda, attracted Jack at once, and hopping on to the table he pulled the glass over and vanished. A pincushion, stuck full of pins, or a pack of cards strewn about puzzled him most. He would be at a loss where to begin, but not for long, and presently the pins would be flying in all directions or the cards be torn to fragments. He delighted in flinging knives and forks about, but would desist when he heard anyone coming, put his head under his wing and feign sleep in a moment. This he did often, when he could not escape detection otherwise. One thing which reduced him to the lowest depths of dejection was to slip an elastic band loosely over his neck. This took all the fight out of him, and he would retire to some corner and stand there, head down, wings drooping, and looking altogether miserable until released. There were several cats about the place, but he defied them all individually and collectively. He never associated with other birds; in fact, he would chase them off any tree that he happened to be sitting on himself. A canary we had at that time, and which was allowed its liberty in the dining-room, he was fiendishly jealous of, and one day coming into the room when no one was about, he found the canary on the floor and pounced upon it, killing it instantly. For this he was ducked in cold water, which he dreaded, and for the rest of that day he did not come near the house, but croaked dismally in the garden—"swore all day," the garden boy declared. He was not particularly demonstrative in showing his affection, though perfectly familiar with all the family. He would, however, be most affectionate with some people who called. A school friend of my brother's, who occasionally came, he took such a fancy to as to make himself a nuisance, though the boy never paid him much attention. Jack was not to be repulsed, however, and he would be in the boy's bedroom before he was up in the morning, sitting close to his head on the pillow, chuckling all the time in a soft, pleased fashion, and I must say he never misbehaved at these times. He was about five years old when he fell a victim to his insatiable curiosity. He must needs investigate the mysteries of a propped open skylight, and by industrious pecking he succeeded in dislodging the bar and, the window descending, broke his neck. In spite of his mischievous ways, he had succeeded in making a niche for himself in the household large enough for us to miss him sorely when he was gone.—M. A. SIMPSON.

THRUSH SINGING ON GROUND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It may interest your correspondent Miss Bourdillon to hear that I have a little friend, a blackbird, who sings on the lawn while he feeds. That is to say for the last two summers I have noticed him doing so, and wondered if it was uncommon.—HEREFORDSHIRE.

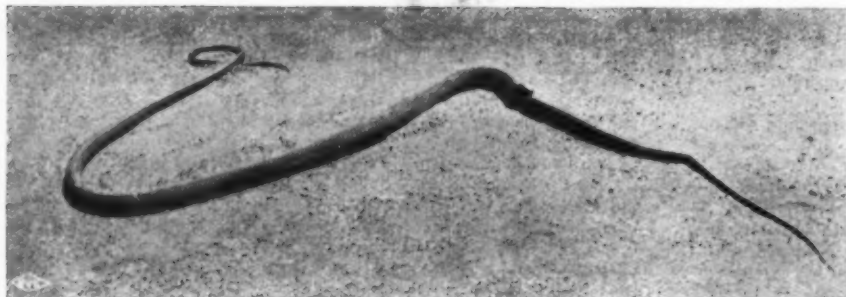
A COLONY OF OWLS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have read with sympathetic interest the letter on the above subject in COUNTRY LIFE of the issue of March 7th from Mr. Henry J. Moxon, who shows the proper spirit of an earnest member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. But I am curious to know how the birds in the tower of the Sussex church were identified as short-eared owls. The species while, I think, increasing in numbers in this country, is in the main only a winter visitor; but when here it commonly lives (as it nests) on the ground on moors, in fens or among the coarse herbage of waste lands. A colony in a church tower is something which needs more than a casual mention. If, however, they are not short-eared owls, but merely "owls" in general, what is it that moves Mr. Moxon to surprise at their discovery in Sussex? My acquaintance with the county, though fairly wide, is, I confess, "spotty"; but I had not supposed that there were many Sussex parishes which did not, in woodland or old building, contain their share of at least one of the commoner species of the owl family.—H. P. R.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In connection with Mr. Moxon's letter in your issue of March 7th, it is impossible for the owls he mentions in St. Botolph's Church tower to be short-eared owls. They must be barn owls, which are abundant throughout Sussex. Indeed, on an average there is at least one pair to every village and hamlet in the county. The short-eared owl may be accounted as quite a rarity, only breeding at all frequently in the Orkneys and Shetlands. Of the remaining three, the long-eared, tawny and barn owls, all are deplorably in a minority in some districts I could name. Of the barn, white or yellow, owl it is quite unnecessary to say more than that nearly everyone who has lived in the country knows it by sight if not by sound; its ghostly white form in the gloaming, as it floats over the pastures and round the farm buildings, as well as its weird, half-stifled scream, half whistle of "skirrrrr" is familiar to most classes. As a point of fact its under parts alone are satiny white, its upper plumage being a pleasant variegation of softly-tinted yellowish fawn and grey with black dots. In the dusk, however, and even when it is lighter, the owl often appears wholly white. When seen dead, or quiescent, although on the *qui vive*, that lover of fir woods, the long-eared owl (quite a common bird in Sussex by the way) may always be recognised by its "ears," which reach anything from 1½ in. to 2 in. in height. I mention "when on the *qui vive*," owing to the fact that both the long and short eared owls only erect their "horns" or "tufts" when under pressure of agitation or excitement. At other times they are depressed. But in no event can these "ears" be seen when the bird is flying, which is the only condition under which the average person ever sees an owl of this species, and that, too, when it is growing dark. The expert, however, who knows where to look



for it (almost invariably in a fir or larch, preferably the former, though very rarely in an ivy-covered deciduous tree in a fir wood or plantation), may visit a likely haunt and in one afternoon detect several individuals—in different trees and generally some distance apart—whose slim and elegantly-elongated forms are pressed against the bole of the tree, standing as each one is at the junction of a more or less horizontal branch with the parent stem. And generally they are a fair height up in the tree. Only the other day (March 4th) I watched one for some minutes in a sapling fir and only about 8ft. from the ground. Sometimes the bird is seen standing on a branch at some distance from the trunk; often it has several recognised "roosts," more often than not close together, which it patronises indiscriminately. Once these are known, it is generally easy to find it "at home." On flight, the chief characteristics of the long-eared owl, as against the tawny owl, are its more elegant bearing, swifter flight, slimmer form and longer and not such rounded wings, as well as—only, of course, this observation alone holds good for the daytime, when the bird, unless disturbed, is seldom abroad—its yellower tone of brown apparel. Moreover, the tawny owl comparatively rarely frequents fir woods (though it delights in oak woods, where the long-eared species is seldom seen), so that, in the majority of cases, any owl seen dimly in a wood of that description is, failing any better evidence, probably a long-eared owl. At rest in a tree the latter may instantly be separated from the tawny owl by its narrower shape; when roused, by its long, erected head tufts and by its staring yellow eyes. The tawny owl (*atlas* the brown, wood or hoot owl), of which kind there are two distinct shades, one grey, the other rufous brown (the latter being by far the commoner), which are, as I have definitely demonstrated, dependent neither on age nor sex, has no "tufts," is a stouter-built fellow, and its eyes, in addition to being much larger, are of a uniform, liquid blue-black. Coming to the short-eared owl (only found in Sussex during autumn and winter, when it frequents the rough fields at the foot of the downs and any waste land, such as Pevensey Marsh), this bird is in reality the most easily-diagnosed species of the quartet under discussion, not only by reason of its love for open country (I have never known or heard of one settling in a tree), but also because day light possesses no sort of terror for it, seeing that it hunts at intervals all day long; from the fact, too, that it often gets up almost under foot, its colours and general appearance are readily discernible. Its most telling characteristics, when it is viewed at any moderate range, are, firstly, its very pale creamy buff hue (at a long range it appears a creamy white), and then its long wings, longer than those of any of the other three. In addition its flight, though divinely easy, is more "flicking" than that of the barn, tawny or long-eared owls. Without entering into any further details, such as the distinct difference in coloration of the two species, I may just say that the short-eared owl when in the hand, or, indeed, when seen at rest, may at once be distinguished from the tawny by its bright orange-yellow irides, which are something like those of the long-eared owl, and from the latter bird by its short head tufts, which seldom exceed 5-8in. in length and are frequently rather less, whereas those of the long-eared owl—as already pointed out—are anything from 1½in. to 2in. Furthermore, the pattern of the short-eared owl's plumage is a mixture of broad and definite stripes on a pale buffish ground, as against the many vermiculated mottlings to be seen on the richer buff apparel of the long-eared owl.—JOHN WALPOLE-BOND.

SNAKE FIGHT IN A SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM—VICTOR SWALLOWS VANQUISHED.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—A fight to the death between two South African snakes took place at the Port Elizabeth Museum on January 16th last, and the weird combat had the unusual termination of the larger of the combatants swallowing the other, or, at all events, the best part of him. The two reptiles—a green boomslang, 4ft. 9in. long, and a brown boomslang, 3ft. 9in. long—were confined in the

same case. Apparently, both felt the pangs of hunger about the same time, and evidently each fancied the same two frogs. The snakes scuttled after the frogs, but the brown had the luck to secure both of them. Then the fight began, the green snake viciously attacking his cage-mate. Springing at his rival's skull, the green reptile drove his teeth well home and held on. All the frantic struggles of the brown snake were futile, and those witnessing the fascinating contest soon saw that it was the intention of the victor to swallow his rival. Heaving and undulating, the green snake proceeded with the process of "absorption," and within half-an-hour only 22in. of the brown reptile remained outside the mouth of the green snake. In other words, the victorious snake had swallowed 23in.

of his foe. It was at this juncture that the curator of the museum, Mr. FitzSimons, took the snap-shot here produced, and for this purpose they were taken from the case. Afterwards it was decided to kill the green snake, and "death by nicotine" was the sentence pronounced upon him. A feather passed through the stem of a "juicy" briar pipe, and, heavily fouled with nicotine, was rammed down the boomslang's throat. In less than half a minute the reptile was dead. The specimens, one still within the other, were then preserved in spirit. This queer contest proves irrefutably that snakes do occasionally indulge in the cannibalistic pleasure of swallowing each other. Incidentally it may be mentioned that the curator of the Port Elizabeth Museum has been making a series of important experiments with the boomslang snake, and has made the undoubted discovery that the reptile is deadly poisonous. In the past the boomslang has been considered harmless. This is due to the fact that it cannot inject its venom at the first bite, owing to the peculiar position of the venom fangs, which are at the back of the mouth.

In order to get its poison into a wound it has to bite twice. Anyone who happened to be nipped by the reptile would, of course, in the terror of the moment, throw the snake off before it had time to make its second and fatal bite. It is for this reason that up to quite recently the boomslang has not been classed among the poisonous reptiles of South Africa. In one of the tests made at Port Elizabeth the bite of a boomslang killed a fowl in 7min. As a result of these experiments the boomslang will in future be ruthlessly slaughtered whenever it is found.—A. E. MOYSE.

SEALS ON THE LINCOLNSHIRE COAST.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I am forwarding an interesting photograph which I think your readers may like to see in your pages. It shows the recent capture of a fine young seal at Mablethorpe in Lincolnshire. It had left the deeper water and was stranded in one of the shallow creeks with which this part of the coast abounds at low tide. A man caught the aquatic animal by placing a large piece of flat board underneath it and landing it an effort the seal greatly resented; but, as the picture proves, it took its revenge on its captor by seizing his leg with its sharp teeth. The capture of the seal was quite an unique experience at this quiet little watering-place.—EMILY MASON.

A ROMAN BRIDGE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am sending a photograph of an old Roman bridge, and hope it will be worth publishing in your valuable paper. The bridge is in the Enderby parish, and Enderby is five miles south-west of Leicester. The river in the picture is the Soar.—ARTHUR E. YOUNG.

